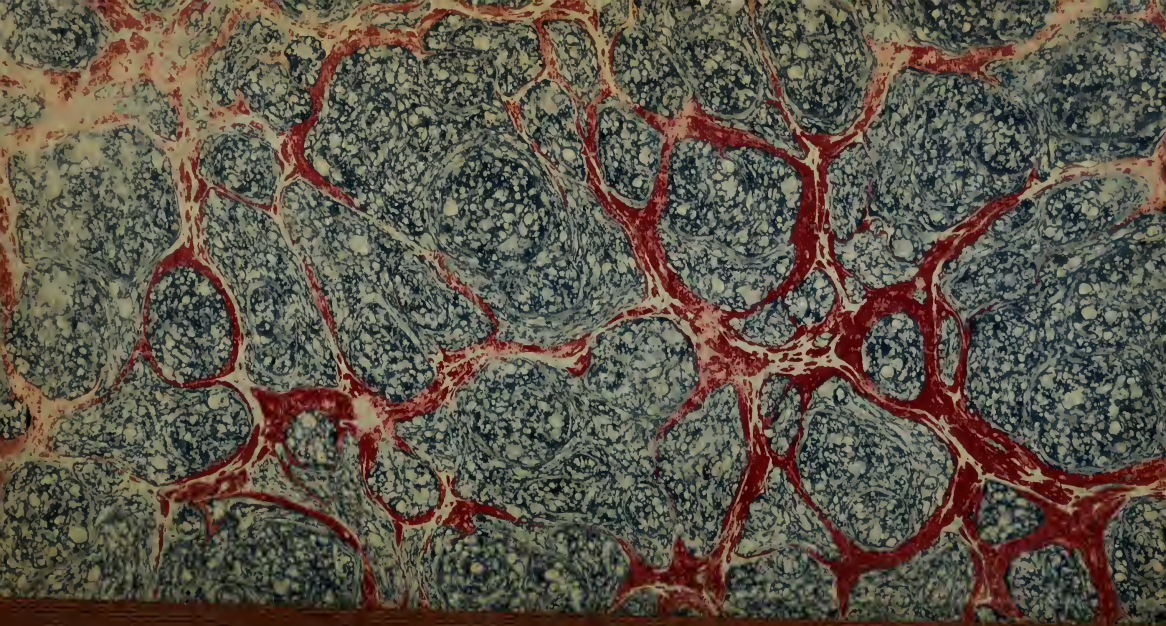

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THE WOMAN OF HONOR.

In THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

Letters bring things more home, and repreſent them more to the life, than either Annals or Lives.

BACON, *Lord* VERULAM.

LONDON,

Printed for T. LOWNDES, at N° 77, in Fleet-ſtreet;

And W. NICOLL, at N° 51, in St. Paul's Church-yard.

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MEMOIRS
OF A
WOMAN of HONOR.

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Bell

LETTER I.

From Mr. MELLEFONT, *to Mrs.* BUCKLEY.

Lancaſhire.

THIS letter, dear aunt, will be delivered to you by that ſiſter of my wife's, of whom you have been ſo good to promiſe that you will

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take care and do her any good offices that may depend on you. But as in my laſt I only ſummarily mentioned the circumſtance of her going to London, it is now very fit to acquaint you more at large of the neceſſary particulars relating to her paſt and preſent circumſtances: In favor of preſerving the chain of which, you will readily excuſe my mentioning certain facts already abundantly known to you.

Her father, the learned Dr. Maynwaring, dying about eleven years after his marriage with the daughter of a country gentleman, left her a widow with two children, Eſther, and Clara. The firſt, being the eldeſt by many years, on her coming into this part of the country, with Mrs. Alderton, a diſtant relation by the father's ſide, with whom ſhe lived as a companion,

companion, I had the good fortune to ſee her, and ſoon, with the approbation of her friends, and eſpecially of Mrs. Alderton, was made, by obtaining her hand, the happieſt of men. Views of fortune in this match I could have none, ſince I well knew that her father had died in rather ſtreight circumſtances, tho' not long after I received the ſmall legacy which you know, on the death of Mrs. Alderton, as a mark of her friendſhip to my wife, and of her approbation of her choice.

Mrs. Maynwaring, her mother, who was, in every point of female worth, an excellent woman, had not failed to give her children the beſt education in her power. In her impatience to ſee her daughter after her marriage with me, as it was not poſſible for me to be ſpared

from my reſidence, ſhe was ſo good as to take a long journey acroſs the country, purely to pay us a viſit; in which there was not wanting to the heartieſt welcome, any circumſtance but that of her not bringing Clara with her, of whom ſhe was unwilling to riſque the fatigue, being but juſt recovered from the inoculation which ſhe had undergone with the utmoſt ſucceſs.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Maynwaring, not long after her return, was ſuddenly carried off by burſting a vein, as ſhe was on ſome occaſion ſtraining beyond her ſtrength to move a cheſt of drawers in her apartment, not having waited for a ſervant to aſſiſt her. On this melancholy news, which I was obliged to conceal from my wife, then on the point of delivery, to whom it would, in all probability, have been fatal,

and

and whom I could invent no plauſible pretext for leaving, I immediately, however, ſent off a perſon to take care of poor Clara, who was left in a very undeſirable condition, and who, even in her tender age, not being full ſeven years old, was ſo little inſenſible to her loſs, that it had nearly killed her. She was actually ſo ill upon it, that ſhe could not immediately bear the removal I had directed of her to our houſe. She remained then under the care of an old nurſe in the family, who, though very willing, was very ill qualified for that, or any office, being ſo worn with years and infirmities, that ſhe died ſoon after Clara's leaving her.

Before this diſtreſs of Clara's ſituation was well over, by the orders I had ſent, and juſt after I had found means, by due

degrees, to break this misfortune to my wife, we had received a conſolatory letter from Mr. Glaſſmore, a merchant of ſome eminence in London, and brother to Mrs. Maynwaring, in which there was an offer, conceived in the moſt tender and affectionate terms, of taking care of Clara, if we would ſend her up to him. Senſible of the advantages to her from our acceptance of this offer, it was not, however, without ſome ſtruggle of prudence with inclination, that Eſther, who paſſionately loved her ſiſter, conſented to the preference, on this occaſion, of her uncle over herſelf.

The point being ſettled, and my wife being as yet too weak to bear any travelling fatigue, I contrived ſo as to go myſelf to Norfolk, where I found Clara ſomewhat recovered, and in a way that I judged

I judged the journey, and change of objects, would rather be of ſervice than not to her health. It is true ſhe much wanted to go with me to her ſiſter, at leaſt, before ſhe went to London, and I was myſelf ſtrongly inclined to give her that ſatiſfaction; but as I found Mr. Glaſſmore had ſent a perſon down to take care of bringing her to town as ſoon as poſſible, I was afraid of his not taking well any retardment.

This gentleman was a widower, left without any iſſue, which, doubtleſs, had ſome influence in his determination to take care of Clara, and even to leave her his fortune, if ſhe ſhould be found to deſerve it.

I had never ſeen her, as I had not been before then in that part of the country.

She was, I repeat it, about her ſeventh year, but for her age rather tall. I had been by my wife prepared for ſeeing an uncommonly pretty child, not however without due allowance being made for deductions for ſiſterly partiality. But for this injuſtice I had now at ſight of her to make honorable amends, for in my life I had never ſeen, never imagined any thing comparable to her for ſweetneſs and beauty of features, delicacy of ſhape and air, and a bloom of complexion, in which the momentary prevalence of the faireſt white over the roſeate hue of her cheeks, from the remaining impreſſions of languor and affliction for the death of her mother, gave an inexpreſſible tenderneſs to her looks, and increaſed the natural ſimpathy for the grief they expreſſed.

Not,

Not, however, to tire you unneceſſarily with particulars, which ſuch an earlineſs of age would not ſuffer to be very intereſting, and which would unmercifully lengthen a letter, that from the introductory deſign of it muſt be a long one, I ſhall only obſerve to you, that ſhe arrived very ſafely in London, where ſhe was received by Mr. Glaſſmore with the utmoſt tenderneſs and affection. The lovelineſs of her figure would, at leaſt, not leſſen ſuch a diſpoſition.

That no cultivation might be wanting to her natural perfections, he placed her immediately under the care of Mrs. Mercier, the widow of a bookſeller, who, by extraction, was a French refugee. At his death, with the little fortune he had left her, ſhe had ſet up a boarding-ſchool for young ladies at Chelſea, and, by her perſonal management,

had brought it into great and juſt reputation. Her method of education was admirable, for without neglecting any one accompliſhment that peculiarly contributes to grace the female ſex, ſhe had a ſpecial regard to cultivating and improving the heart. It was by making virtue amiable, and by placing in its true point of view, of ſuperior dignity and pleaſure in a conſciouſneſs of innocence, that ſhe inſpired her ſcholars with almoſt an enthuſiaſm of love for their duty. Shame, that great engine of education, ſhe employed with great ſparingneſs and attention not to ſtale its effect, or wear out the ſprings of it by too frequent an uſe. Manual correction was entirely out of the queſtion; ſhe looked on it not only as carrying an air of ſlavery with it, but even as contrary to the end propoſed; from its hardening that tender age in its faults, by endearing them

them to it for what it ſuffers for them, and by only adding to it a new guilt, the ſpirit of concealment; which finds a kind of joy in deceiving parents and teachers. Beſides that, if you uſe children to blows or to hard words, they are apt to contract an abject fear, and by dint of being debaſed by others are inſenſibly accuſtomed to debaſe themſelves. The beſt maſters are not ſurely thoſe who prefer bringing their ſcholars forward by ſlaviſh corrections, to the finding out a good method of inſtruction. But that coſts too much trouble. The quickeſt way with them, and which does not require much ſkill, is that of rating and ſtriking. For that there needs nothing more but haſtineſs and ill-nature. Whereas to bring them up by reaſon, there muſt be a care, an attention to their tempers and capacities, a delicacy, in ſhort, of which few teachers are capable. Mrs. Mercier's plan

was to make her pupils fear nothing ſo much as being in diſgrace with themſelves, on having done any thing to incur a juſt reproach from her, which ſhe never made to them, without, at the ſame time, rendering them ſenſible that it was a pain to herſelf, which it was mean and cruel in them to give her. Thus governing more by love than by fear, ſhe was always ſure of the whole ſchool on her ſide, in the caſe of any animadverſion for a fault; the offending party on incurring her diſpleaſure, lay under a kind of civil excommunication, from her companions and play-fellows, who ſhunned her, not without expreſſions of a pity more mortifying than reproach, till, on her ſhow of penitence, or atonement by a better conduct, ſhe was reſtored to the favor of the Governeſs, who had ſucceeded in making herſelf conſidered leſs as the auſtere miſtreſs, than as

the

the tender common mother of them all. Always averſe to the common arbitrary practice of enſlaving children to the authority of prejudices, ſhe was eſpecially careful to put them into the train of an early exerciſe of their reaſoning faculty, without the conviction of which ſhe precautioned them againſt receiving implicitly any opinion; accuſtoming them to inquire into the cauſes of their judgments of things, and leading them to the truth by the way of examination: Thus accuſtoming them to think for themſelves, and not to let their reaſon lie idle, or carry it about them, as ſo many in a more advanced age, like a lame arm in a ſling, as if it would hurt them to uſe it.

Among many other improvements of their underſtanding, ſhe had by early inſtilling into them, a contempt for finery,

done

done the real ſervice to their beauty of defending it againſt the injuries it is ſure to receive from being over-dreſſed. Every thing, eſpecially with children, depends on the light in which it is preſented to them; the ſimplicity of that age being ſuſceptible of any impreſſions, and from the inſtinctive rectitude of nature, moſtly ſo of good ones; they are as much and more to be inflamed by real great objects than by little ones. Among the puniſhments, by ſhame, which ſhe had contrived for vanity or pride, was that of ordering the party under that charge to be dreſſed in her beſt cloaths, with all the trinkets that the fondneſs of parents or relations might have beſtowed on her, and obliged to walk or ſit, for a certain ſpace of time, alone, as being much too good for the company of her ſchool-fellows, who, to humor the joke, kept ironically their diſtance; or, if her

her offence was very flagrant indeed, they compelled her to ſit on a ſtool, and danced round her, as milk maids before a May garland. But to turn this act of deriſion to the general improvement, independently of the example, Mrs. Mercier entreated her pupils, upon their own judgment, to which ſhe fairly appealed, to ſatisfy themſelves that dreſs, carried beyond an elegant neatneſs, could be of no ſort of advantage in the eyes of perſons of true taſte; and as to ſuperficial judges or to underſtandings no better than thoſe of fops in one ſex or triflers in the other, the preferable point would be not to pleaſe them. Without countenancing or allowing any malignant criticiſm or reflexion on the perſon of the party under this ſentence of finery, ſhe made them every one, and even the delinquent thus expoſed, ſenſible of the folly and eſpecially of the fal-

ſity

ſity of a reliance on the foreign ornaments of dreſs, thoſe treacherous auxiliaries, which, if a woman is pretty, divide the attention to her perſonal charms, and, in the eye of taſte, are no more an improvement of them, than gilding to a fine ſtatue. But if ſhe is homely, the damage is ſtill greater: fine cloaths and jewels not only draw on thoſe who are under that diſinheritance from nature more attention, by making their misfortune more conſpicuous, but robs them of the compaſſion due to them for that injury, by the indignation which finery ſo murdered muſt excite. It is only for ideots not to abſtract the perſon from the trappings. With men of taſte beauty will be beauty in a ſtuff gown and colored handkerchief, and uglineſs uglineſs though capariſoned all over like the Mogul's elephant, with rubies and diamonds. In ſhort, the idea

of

of a gorgeous dreſs remained on the minds of the young ladies, as much aſſociated with that of ſhame and contempt, as the fear of a ſtreight waiſtcoat with a dread of pain in the wounded imagination of thoſe liable to it for inſanity. And as the rage of over-dreſſing is a kind of madneſs, a fine gown was repreſented to them as the ſtreight waiſtcoat of it.

There was another particularity in Mrs. Mercier's ſchool which was of great ſervice to the pupils. The back part of her houſe communicated with a very ſpacious incloſure, which was partly a garden, partly a wilderneſs, with a large room on one ſide, to ſerve for a ſhelter in bad weather; it was here that the amiable troop were regularly conducted to their diverſion for two hours before dinner, and encouraged to uſe as much motion and exerciſe as their vivacity

vivacity or inclination ſhould ſuggeſt to them. They were eſpecially, and without any the leaſt air of compulſion, imperceptibly guided to make their choice of thoſe kind of amuſements that required the greateſt activity. Rehearſals of the leſſons of their dancing-maſters, digging appropriate ſpots in the garden, the country ſports of ſwinging, and even of flinging coits, bowling, riding, no diverſion, in ſhort, was judged too violent that was conſiſtent with the modeſty of the ſex. There were even prizes inſtituted for excellence in feats of dexterity: all which were controuled and managed with ſo much delicacy, that while they excluded every idea of too maſculine an air, they manifeſtly preſerved the ſhape from the coarſeneſs of a corpulence contracted by idleneſs and inaction, they gave a glow of freſhneſs to the complexion, and laid

laid the ſolid foundations of a healthy conſtitution. Nor was this end a little promoted by Mrs. Mercier's taking care to keep their palate to that ſimplicity of diet, a reliſh for which is originally the precious gift of nature, too often deſtroyed by being inſenſibly betrayed into an habitual taſte for made-diſhes, and for all thoſe poiſons of modern cookery, to which beauty, health, and life are ſo often the ſacrifice. Knowing human nature too well to give an inclination to them by prohibitions, and being ſenſible that at the tables of their relations they would be ſure to meet with thoſe pernicious dainties under the recommendation of rarity and expenſiveneſs, ſhe imagined it beſt to guard againſt their ſeduction by anticipation. Her own table, then, was never without one or two of thoſe articles, which were left to the diſcretion of her pupils; but they

they appeared conſtantly under ſuch marks of reprobation and diſguſt, that none of them were tempted to touch them; ſome would, when purpoſely deſired to make trial of them, ſputter at them, like the ſavages when they firſt taſte ſalt; ſo that when they ſaw the like at the tables of their friends, they were prepared and proof againſt any temptation from them. Add to all this precautionary management, that there was a note of ſhame, upon any appearance of a lickeriſhneſs, of which their underſtandings had been convinced of the danger even to their beauty.

It was in this ſchool that Clara received her education, and by the readineſs of her proficiency in every branch of it, was the darling and pride of the governeſs's heart, to whom it did ſo much honor; while the natural ſweetneſs of her

temper

temper was great enough to ſubdue the envy of her ſchool-fellows, and at length to make them forgive her ſuperiority even in points the leaſt apt to be forgiven.

Do not imagine that any partiality of a relation could bias me to exagerate her merit, I but repeat Mrs. Mercier's teſtimony of her, and in her own words.

I ſhall only here ſtate one incident that will ſerve to characterize at once Clara's ſentiments, and the diſcretion of her governeſs.

Among the ornaments with which her uncle Mr. Glaſſmore's fondneſs had enabled her to diſtinguiſh her apartment, there was a ſuperb Chineſe temple of mother-of-pearl, of an uncommonly curious and coſtly workmanſhip, the preſent of a Chi-

na-

na-ſupercargo. This was not only very much valued by Clara, on account of its beauty, but as ſhe had deſigned it for one of the marks of her gratitude to Mrs. Mercier, upon that worthy woman's birth-day, of which the ſcholars having obtained the ſpecification by diſcovering the regiſter of it on a family bible, had conſtantly ſince made a law among themſelves to celebrate it, out of pure affection to her, and forced her not only to conſent to this compliment, but to accept any preſents they thought would be the moſt agreeable, and of which any refuſal from her would have been a real mortification to them. This day was then nea at hand, when Clara, upon ſome occaſion happening to enter her apartment, found in it one of the half-boarders, all in tears, and in the utmoſt conſternation for having rather careleſsly, in moving a chair, thrown

thrown down the ſtand on which the Chineſe temple had been placed, and which now lay on the floor in a thouſand glittering fragments. As heartily chagrined as Clara was, eſpecially at the diſappointment of her deſign, which however ſhe had never mentioned to any one, the unaffected concern and grief in which ſhe ſaw the poor girl, who was the cauſe of this accident, turned all her thoughts to comfort her, and to relieve her from the diſtreſs of her fears, not only from her reſentment, but of Mrs. Mercier's. After then taking ſome pain to excuſe the girl's careleſſneſs even to her own ſelf, ſhe removed her apprehenſion of the governeſs's anger, by taking the accident upon herſelf. This for ſome little time paſſed current. Mrs. Mercier condoled with her on her loſs, and the girl who had really broken the temple would have eſcaped ſo much

much as ſuſpicion, but for her own impatience of the ſecret in the fulneſs of her gratitude. She could not help, under the ſeal of ſecrecy, communicating to one of the young ladies, the obligation ſhe thought herſelf under to Clara for her procedure on this occaſion. This young lady, rather edified by it than from any ill intention, thought it a pity that Clara, who was univerſally beloved, ſhould loſe the merit of ſuch an act of good nature, and, in that ſpirit, divulged it through the ſchool. By this means it came to Mrs. Mercier's ears. There were not two opinions about it, except only that the governeſs ſaw cauſe in it to give a leſſon to all her pupils. On the firſt occaſion, then, of their being all aſſembled, ſhe ſingled out Clara, and after preparing her to receive, without reluctance, her remonſtrance, by a preliminary approbation of the good natured motive

tive on which ſhe had acted, ſhe obſerved to her, that it was to that motive her error againſt truth was obliged for a pardon, which was enough to ſatisfy her that it was an error, ſince if it were not one, what occaſion could there be for forgiveneſs; that truth was too great a ſacrifice to make to almoſt any good; that in this ſingle falſity ſhe had not only been herſelf guilty, but the cauſe of guilt in another, and that the miſchief had gone farther, by its being the occaſion of a young lady's betraying the ſecret confided in her, though moſt probably with a good intention; that, in ſhort, nobody could tell where the moral evil proceeding from a falſity would ſtop; whereas truth was, at

leaſt, eternally, by its nature, defended from any fear of ſhame or reproach.

Clara, whoſe docility could only be equalled by her candor, and whoſe deteſtation of falſity had, on this occaſion, only been momentarily blinded by an invincible emotion of compaſſion, touched to the heart at this repreſenſation from Mrs. Mercier, of the propriety of which ſhe was intimately convinced, took hold of the hand which her governeſs extended to her, as a ſign of perfect cordiality, and moiſtening it with tears of gratitude, thanked her for her inſtruction, the ſincerity of her regard for which, ſhe ſaid, ſhould be proved by an inviolable obſervance of it in future.

Mr.

Mr. Glaſſmore, on being informed of this loſs of Clara's, and of her behaviour on it, was ſo charmed, that he immediately repaired the damage by the preſent of a magnificent ſet of dreſſing boxes, of the old Japan, for her toilet, accompanied with a large ſilver coffee-pot, which ſerved Clara to acquit herſelf of the engagement ſhe had ſecretly contracted with herſelf, to make Mrs. Mercier a preſent on the anniverſary commemoration I have already mentioned.

I ſhall paſs over the reſt of her proceedings, at that ſchool, except juſt one circumſtance, of which, before the concluſion of this letter, you will ſee the neceſſity.

Among other the ſocial virtues which Mrs. Mercier had ſtudiouſly inculcated to her pupils, as the great ſources of happineſs, ſhe had not omitted that of friendſhip. She had obſerved to them, that men, with very little pretention to the thing, had contented themſelves with the name, which in general, they proſtituted, by giving it to a commerce of intereſt; or to an aſſociation in follies or vices; but that as to the women, the other ſex, who laid claim to it as purely a manly virtue, honored them with a ſuppoſition of their being abſolutely incapable of it, and excluded them from it as formally as Mahomet is *ſaid* to do from his Paradiſe. Female friendſhip was, according to them, a chimera, a non-

entity,

entity, the men grudging them even the name, which is all that they theirſelves retain of it. It was not then as a point only of honor, but of happineſs, that ſhe recommended the cultivation of that virtue; ſhe convinced their underſtanding of how great utility a well-choſen friend might be, on many occaſions, and that there was not a ſingle good argument to be offered why ſuch connexions were not as deſirable, as worthy among women, as among men; nay, that the weaker the female ſex was, the more expedient it was to multiply its props, and that friendſhip was ſurely not one of the leaſt; that, after all, a jeſt was not a reaſon: and that if delicacy was one of the chief ingredients of that virtue, the women were incon-

teſtably, in that point, as much qualified as the men.

Reaſons leſs powerful than theſe would have ſufficed to perſuade a heart ſo diſpoſed to every ſentiment of worth, as Clara's naturally was. Beſides then, the perfect harmony in which ſhe lived with all her companions, ſhe had met above half way the advances made to her by one of the young ladies of the ſchool, a daughter of Earl Lovell, her name Lady Harriet, and about one year older than herſelf. A certain ſimpathy of temper, and conformity of taſte, in their favorite objects of improvement, in ſhort, in every thing, had firſt begun their intimacy, which habit afterwards ſtrengthened and laſtingly

ingly cemented. Without any ſuch affectation of the name of friends, as might be diſagreeable to the reſt of that amiable ſociety, who were all competitors for Clara's preference, they contented themſelves with the pleaſure they found in the reality of the ſentiment, of which they omitted no opportunity of convincing one another.

In this tenor of life, in the boſom of improvement, and in all the ſatisfaction of innocent amuſements, Clara had attained to her fourteenth year, when her uncle, impatient of having ſuch a treaſure nearer him, took her home, to the great grief of Mrs. Mercier and of the whole ſchool, but eſpecially of Lady Harriet, who not enduring to ſtay there

after her, prevailed likewiſe on her mother to take her away.

Mr. Glaſſmore, who had long been ſenſible of his niece's ſuperior merit of perſon and accompliſhments, not content with a profuſion on her of every thing he imagined would pleaſe her, ſet her at the head of his houſe, of which he conſidered her, and not without reaſon, as the greateſt ornament. In ſhort, he idoliſed her to ſuch a degree, as was very capable of ſpoiling one leſs fortified by nature and education.

And here it would be ingratitude for me to omit, that ſhe had conſtantly given us the moſt tender marks of her remem-

remembrance of us, not only in frequent letters to her ſiſter, which breathed nothing but the ſpirit of goodneſs and affection, but by ſending us, on every occaſion, preſents of ſuch value, that we were obliged very ſeriouſly to remonſtrate to her againſt the exceſs. Nor did ſhe ſtop at this, but as her influence over her uncle grew to ſuch a point, that he followed all the impreſſions ſhe was pleaſed to ſuggeſt to him, he gave us proof, in many eſſentials, of his natural regard for Eſther, being greatly increaſed by her quality of ſiſter to Clara. In ſhort, it is but fair to confeſs, that much of the preſent eaſe of our circumſtances we owe to her good offices with Mr. Glaſſmore.

But alas! that ſo good an intention, as that of this fond uncle, ſhould be, by his ſtraining it beyond the bounds of diſcretion, pernicious to himſelf. It was but juſt, but natural, for him to think, that the greater was his niece's merit, perſonal and acquired, the leſs ſhe would need a fortune, to which that merit was ſo rich a ſupplement. But as nothing, in this world, is eaſier or more common, than to ruinouſly confound a true good with a falſe one, Mr. Glaſſmore, who had never been covetous of money for himſelf, began to conſider it as the ſupreme good, in the paſſion of his heart, for the adding to thoſe advantages of Nature and Art, of which Clara was already ſo eminently poſſeſſed,

poſſeſſed, that of a fortune equal to them. In this ſpirit, he, who had been before noted for rather a ſlow, cautious, circumſpect dealer, ſuddenly went over to the other extreme, and launched out into trade, in a manner that ſurpriſed every one that knew him. Then it was that, for the firſt time, he was ſeen to prefer the chance of ſudden great gains, to the repetition of ſlow, moderate, and more ſecure ones. Some ſucceſſes, at firſt, ſo elated and encouraged him to proceed, that, big with the hopes they inſpired, he uſed to talk of nothing leſs than giving Clara fourſcore or a hundred thouſand pounds to her fortune; and, in all probability, very ſincerely meant as he ſaid. Unluckily, in the very year that he

had taken her home, no leſs than four capital adventures, in which he had riſked by much the greateſt part of his ſubſtance, failed, ſo that in aiming to raiſe her a fortune, he ſunk his own. His conſtitution, originally never a very good one, had been for ſome time ſenſibly declining, the conſciouſneſs of which had, perhaps, contributed to that precipitancy with which he proceeded in his endeavours to accumulate the fortune he was projecting for Clara. This blow then going to his heart, in its diſappointment of his darling ſcheme, was, no doubt, of fatal conſequence to his health, and the more ſo, for that he could not prevail on himſelf to procure the relief of unboſoming himſelf to the ſole object of his confi-

confidence, of his affection, of his care. He could not, indeed, quite conceal his melancholy from Clara, though he endeavoured it as much as poſſible, which only made his grief prey the more fiercely on him inwards, but the cauſe of it ſhe could not even gueſs, having never heard him mention a word of his loſſes, a reſerve which very likely proceeded from his fear of giving her any uneaſineſs. Not to dwell then diſagreeably to you on this ſubject of affliction, and without particulariſing the hiſtory of his illneſs, I haſten to the fatal concluſion of it. A few minutes before his death, of the approaches of which he was ſenſenſible, he intimated a deſire to ſpeak to Clara alone, who was ſo weak with

her

her conſtant attendance, and watching him, as well as with her fears and grief for his condition, that ſhe was ſcarce more alive than himſelf. The attendants being all withdrawn, ſhe had juſt ſpirits and ſenſe enough to obſerve, that he was in that ſort of confuſion for uttering what he had to ſay, which attends a repugnance to give vent to a ſmothered ſecret. He began twice or thrice to articulate a few ſcarce intelligible words, that ſeemed expreſſions of a tender concern and compaſſion, when he was ſtopped ſhort by the force of his diſeaſe: it is probable the inward conflict he was induring haſtened his agony, for thence-forwards he remained ſpeechleſs till the laſt inſtant of his breath, which was about

about a quarter of an hour afterwards. Clara frightened, and ſkreaming for help, was carried out of the room.

We were preſently appriſed of this cataſtrophe, and immediately ſet out for town, where our preſence was on many accounts indiſpenſably neceſſary. You being at that time in Cornwall with your late huſband, we could not have the benefit of your counſels.

Nothing could be more moving than the deep diſtreſs in which we found Clara; pale, extenuated, and ſinking under her grief. I ſincerely believe that our arrival ſaved her life, or at leaſt retrieved her from the gates of death, which ſeemed already opening for

for her. But the ſight of her ſiſter, from whom ſhe had been ſo long abſent, and whom ſhe had always expreſſed a paſſionate deſire to ſee, ſomewhat revived her, and gave her the firſt gleam of conſolation, ſince the death of Mr. Glaſſmore. She had from that time remained in ſuch a ſtate of ſtupefaction and unconcern for any thing, that ſhe had never once thought of any point of intereſt, or of what ſhe had to expect from the ſtate of his affairs; and the compaſſion with which ſhe had inſpired all who ſaw her, had kept them from mentioning it to her.

When his will was opened, it appeared to be of a very recent date, and conformable to his latter circumſtances.

He

He had left my wife two hundred pounds, with ſome other bequeathments to ſervants, and Clara reſiduary legatee. But by a very fair calculation, from the very clear accounts he had kept to the laſt, it was preſently diſcovered, that, all due deductions made, the whole of what was left would not exceed from between fifteen hundred to two thouſand pounds. This, with Milbury-farm in Somerſetſhire, which in his life-time he had irrevocably ſecured to her, and may bring in ſomething above a hundred a year, conſtitute the whole of her fortune, inſtead of that princely one with which his fond aſſurances had often flattered her. Out of his conſtant liberal ſupplies ſhe had made ſome little reſerve of money and jewels, which might

might have been much greater, but for her own diſpoſition and generoſity.

However, ſuch was her unaffected diſintereſtedneſs, that on any mention to her of condolance, relative to her diſappointment of fortune, ſhe could hardly conceive what they meant by it; ſhe was ſo thoroughly ſatisfied with the comparatively ſmall matter that was left, and eſteemed it a competency for any wants ſhe could figure to herſelf, in her actual moderation of deſires, and propoſed ſimplicity of life. But the memory of her uncle was only the dearer to her for the cauſe of that diminution of her intended fortune, which never gave her a moment's uneaſineſs.

As

As ſoon as ſhe had paid her laſt ſad duties to his remains, her earneſt intreaty to us was to take her down for a while into the country with us, there, in the boſom of our family, to reſtore her wounded ſpirits. There was nothing ſhe could have propoſed more agreeable to our own wiſhes.

I ought not to omit mentioning here, that no ſooner had Clara been taken home by her uncle, whoſe declarations of his intentions to make her ſo great a fortune had been currently received and believed, that even in that tender age of her's there had preſented themſelves a number of ſuitors, ſome of them in very opulent circumſtances, but

but whom Mr. Glaſſmore had not encouraged, in his idea of procuring one of the firſt matches in the kingdom for her. After his death, when it was diſcovered that her fortune was nothing equal to what had been given out, there was not one of thoſe who had propoſed their pretentions that deſerted her. As ever ſince her uncle's demiſe ſhe had ſhut herſelf up, and remained inacceſſible to any viſitors, it was to my wife that all of them made their applications, and intreated her good offices. But as that was not the time to touch ſuch a ſtring, there could be no anſwer returned to their propoſals, but a civilly eluſive one, referring them to herſelf, when her affliction ſhould be moderated enough for an application of

that

that kind to be more conſiſtent with decency. Some of her ſuitors acquieſced in the reaſonableneſs of this delay; others, in letters (which were conſtantly with great politeneſs returned to them,) in the genteeleſt manner they could imagine, covertly inſinuated the merit of their perſeverance, even after the diſcovery of the diſparity of her fortune to theirs. At that time, Clara was too much engroſſed by her affliction to take notice of any thing of that kind, but when ſhe became reſtored to a little more tranquillity of mind, ſhe ſaid, on their being mentioned to her, that ſhe could ſee but very little difference, in point of delicacy, between ſuch as ſhould drop their ſuit, on finding the inferiority of her fortune, and thoſe who

made a merit to her of their perſiſtance, notwithſtanding the ſuperiority of theirs, the very mention of which betrayed their taking into the account a circumſtance according to her ideas of things, of a nature very foreign to a paſſion of which ſhe knew nothing, nor deſired to know, except that ſhe believed it ſtood very little upon reſpects of fortune, and was only the better for that contempt, however the world might be in general of another opinion.

Upon the whole, there appeared in Clara ſo great an indifference, or rather averſion for this ſubject, that we never ventured to renew the offence of it to her.

All diſpoſitions being made for returning to our parſonage-houſe, Clara left a letter for Lady Harriet, who was then at the family ſeat, with her mother, at Moultray; and, after taking a moſt tender leave of Mrs. Mercier, who, in her viſits, had been of great ſervice in joining her conſolatory efforts to ours, we ſet out for my parſonage-houſe, where we arrived without any accident or inconvenience by the way.

Here it was that the gloom of Clara's melancholy firſt gave ſigns of diſſipating, with the removal and change of objects, while her natural chearfulneſs began to regain its aſcendant, and

and ſhew itſelf in gleams of ſmiles, which were drawn from her by the little careſſes and playfulneſs of our children. But ſurely nothing could be more engaging, nor more edifying, than her behaviour. The country ladies round us, who had been prepared for all the inſolence and affectation of a fine lady's airs, were agreeably ſurpriſed to find in their ſtead ſo ſweet a ſimplicity of manners, and an unaſſumingneſs, which was the reſult of the moſt perfect modeſty in every ſenſe of that word. Nothing was more eaſy to ſee, than that ſhe had a great deal of true wit, and, at the ſame time, that ſhe did not herſelf ſuſpect it, by her neither affecting to ſhow or to conceal it.

But

But even we, who had many reaſons to anticipate every thing that was amiable, from what we had precedently experienced of her conduct, or had reaſon to infer from the ſpirit of her letters, could not help being ſtruck with the eaſe and grace with which ſhe entered into our domeſtic occupations, and ſlid into all the female functions of rural œconomy.

Theſe exerciſes, together with the country air, ſoon had their uſual effect; ſhe preſently recovered the florid bloom of her complexion, and ſtood reſtored in beauty. It is without any the leaſt exageration, I can aſſure you, that few of our neighbouring Gentlemen have ſeen her with impu-

nity, or are proof againſt her numerous attractions; many of them have already declared themſelves; and even Mr. Collins, our ſquire, who, in his life, was never heard to praiſe any thing but dogs and horſes, does her the honor of preferring her to them. But without any airs of inſolent beauty, of prudery, or coquetry, Clara has hitherto eluded all their addreſſes, by the art of keeping them at a diſtance, without offence. Her ſhunning them appears to proceed leſs from her diſlike of them, than from her natural love of retirement.

She was extremely pleaſed with a very large cloſet adjoining to her chamber, which I have added to the par-

parſonage houſe ſince you ſaw it. Without any the leaſt romantic turn of head, the melancholic mood in which ſhe arrived here was pleaſingly ſoothed by the ſituation of it, ſweetly ſhaded by the trees of a neighbouring grove, where the ſilence of its ſolitude is only broken by the warbling of birds, and by a rill of the cleareſt water, forming a natural caſcade with almoſt a muſical murmur. Here, on a harpſichord of my wife's, ſhe ſpent ſome of her time, in the cultivation of her accompliſhment in muſic, which ſhe would diſdain to poſſeſs in any degree inferior to that of a miſtreſs of the art. Here, accompanying that inſtrument with a very fine ſoprano voice, and with thoſe graces which are ſo great

an addition to vocal execution, ſhe would, on the leaſt intimation of its affording us pleaſure, and without any of the grimace to none ſo common as to the worſt players, without their thinking themſelves ſo, give us one of the higheſt entertainments of which the human refinement of nature by art is ſuſceptible. You know my paſſion for muſic, and have often blamed me for the exceſs of it; you will then think that this renders me partial; but lady Proſſer, who is univerſally allowed to be a great and real judge, loudly confirms my opinion of the ſuperiority of Clara's both voice and performance. In neither did I ever hear any of the Italian ſingers excel her, no, not even in the graces of ſong, which

the

the more natural they ſeem, are but the more difficult to learn.

She has given us too an excellent miniature picture of her own painting, of Flora, our ſecond child, in an attitude of ſleeping, which is another proof of her determination never to remain contented with mediocrity in any improvement ſhe attempts. In that ſpirit, ſhe made herſelf perfect miſtreſs of the Italian, which ſhe at firſt began only for its uſe in her ſtudy of muſic.

You will then eaſily gueſs how happy the ſtay with us, of ſo accompliſhed, ſo amiable a ſiſter, was likely to make us, while, from the return of her gaiety, and the ſatiſ-

faction ſhe expreſſed at her condition with us, we were in hopes that happineſs would have been more laſting. An incident, none of us expected, has, at leaſt, interrupted it.

Clara had often mentioned Lady Harriet to us, always with the utmoſt tenderneſs, and latterly with ſome little regret and ſurprize at not having heard from her. It was not full two days from her making this remark, that an expreſs came down from that young Lady, and brought Clara a letter, of which, as it relates to the occaſion of this to you, I incloſe you the copy.

LET-

LETTER

From Lady HARRIET LOVELL *to Miss* CLARA MAYNWARING.

London, Auguſt.

" *My ever dear friend,*

" YOU cannot conceive how " vexed I have been at my receiv- " ing ſo late your letter, through " the negligence of our porter, who " kept it till I came laſt night to town. " I ſhould certainly have had him turned " away, but that I am clear his fault " proceeded rather from ſtupidity than " ill-intention; and as his innocent wife " and children would be involved in his " puniſhment, I am perſuaded that I " ſhould not make my court to you by

" an act of ſeverity, whatever the juſtice " of it might be. It is, then, to the " implied interceſſion of your goodneſs " that he owes his not loſing his place.

" So far in juſt excuſe for the delay of " my anſwer.

" I do not mean to peſter you with a " condoleance of mere ceremony, and " leſs yet with common-place conſola- " tion; but I ſincerely ſimpathiſe with " you; I know your ſenſibility, and, " will not, therefore, dwell upon a ſub- " ject ſo fit to refreſh the ſmart of its " wounds.

" I ſay nothing to you either of the " new-diſcovered inferiority of your for- " tune

" tune to the expectation which had
" been raiſed of it: why ſhould I, know-
" ing your way of thinking as I do,
" offer you any arguments to extenuate
" your loſs of an advantage which you
" would certainly deſpiſe if you had it?
" You are but too rich in endowments,
" infinitely ſuperior to thoſe of fortune:
" a head leſs good than yours would be
" turned with the high-ground on which
" you ſtand, ſo much above the greateſt
" part of our ſex, in the points of ex-
" cellence we moſt covet.

" How dare you, then, talk to me
" of the diſparity of our conditions?
" In what have I deſerved this of you?
" I do you more juſtice. If it is the
" part of inferiority to aſk favors; ſee

" a confeſſion of it in the ſuit I have to
" make to you in this letter; and let
" me tell you, that it would be great
" injuſtice in you to deny it me, ſince
" you are the cauſe of my neceſſity for
" it; you, who have made almoſt the
" whole world indifferent to me by com-
" pariſon of it to you. [In that word
" *almoſt* there lies a miſtery, which when
" I ſee you ſhall ceaſe to be one.] Yes,
" Clara, you alone have made me ſen-
" ſible of the eſſential diſtinction be-
" tween a recourſe to acquaintance from
" an impatience of ſolitude, and the joys
" of friendſhip founded on virtue and
" mutual improvement. Is it not to
" your example, to my emulation of
" your dignity of ſentiments and man-
" ners, that I am more indebted for the

" little

" little I am worth, than to all Mrs.
" Mercier's leſſons? All the company
" I ſee only reminds me of you, and
" nothing ſupplies the place of you.
" Society at beſt appears to me a
" dreary deſert, in which here and there,
" at great diſtances, in characters like
" yours, one meets with a few ſpots
" of verdure, that are of ſome relief to
" the tired traveller. But now you are
" more neceſſary to me than ever; for
" ſince I had the happineſs of ſeeing
" you laſt, an occurrence, of the greateſt
" importance to the reſt of my life,
" has taken place, about which I need
" ſuch a friend as you, in whoſe boſom
" I may depoſite my fears, my anxie-
" ties, my alarms.

" If, then, your regard for me is not " a vain profeſſion, of which, however, " far be it from me to ſuſpect you; " if, in our tender years, our ſingling " one another out, in diſtinction from " the reſt of the world, was not rather a " childiſh playing at friendſhip, than " laying a ſolid foundation for the per- " ſeverance of ſo noble, ſo delicious, ſo " virtuous a ſentiment; come and " bleſs me with your company for as " long as you can afford your abſence " from your ſiſter, or ſhe will ſpare " you. She will lay me under an " immortal obligation, if ſhe gives her " conſent. Incloſed with this you will " receive my mother's invitation, which " is as civil a one as ſhe would write to

" any

" any one under a Princeſs. You
" know her idea, which, with all due
" reſpect to her, is, I aſſure you, not
" mine, of rank, and how apt ſhe is
" to proportion her ſtile: but, with
" regard to you, her fondneſs for me
" makes you an exception.

" I ſhould tell you, too, that I ima-
" gine a country-receſs is of too ſolitary
" a nature to anſwer the purpoſe of
" compleating the diſſipation of your
" melancholy, and that a little of the
" whirl of amuſements in a town life, may
" ſerve to make a not unneceſſary di-
" verſion to your grief: but that I wiſh
" your yielding to my preſſing inſtances
" for your accepting my invitation may

" be

" be purely owing to your own good-
" neſs, to your own friendſhip for me.

" Come, then, my ſweet girl, come as
" ſoon as you poſſibly can; come and
" enliven me with your preſence: there
" is but one ſun, there is but one
" Clara, and I ſhall hail your ap-
" pearance with more joy, than the long
" benighted Greenlander does the re-
" turn of the ſolar orb to gild his ho-
" rizon, after a ſix months abſence.

" Once more, in this requeſt remem-
" ber, that I am recommending to you
" one of the points I have the moſt at
" my heart: conſult yours, and deny
" me if you dare or can.

" Yours, &c.

" HARRIET LOVELL."

The foregoing letter Clara directly put into our hands, and as the expreſs waited for the anſwer, we could not well avoid coming to an immediate determination.

It was with the moſt tender regard, with the gentleſt ſubmiſſiveneſs to an authority we certainly had not over her, any farther than her own choice gave it us, that ſhe left us to pronounce whether ſhe ſhould or not accept this invitation. At the ſame time ſhe did not diſſemble to us her own inclination to comply with it, though unfeignedly ready to ſacrifice her deſires to ours. She was ſenſible, ſhe ſaid, of the danger to one of her years and inexperience,

in

in going into ſo gay and mixed a ſphere of life, as that in which her companionſhip to Lady Harriet would introduce her; and that none were more likely to fail in that career, than ſuch as preſume the moſt on their own forces; but that on one great principle ſhe durſt venture to rely, which was, that ſhe would always herſelf mean the beſt, though without any preſumption on her own infallibility; that, on the contrary, ſhe depended on nothing ſo much as on the precautions ſhe propoſed to take againſt herſelf, judging, that her greateſt ſafeguard againſt her being deceived by others, would be, to take particular care not to be deceived by herſelf; concluding with a repetition of ſending an excuſe to Lady Harriet, if

we

we ſhould diſapprove of her giving her that mark of her friendſhip ſhe fairly owned ſhe wiſhed to do.

Upon this repreſentation, though we had many objections to oppoſe to her going, independent of our own ardent deſire to have her longer with us, we not only cordially returned her the compliment of leaving the point entirely to her own deciſion, but I took upon me, dear aunt, to offer her, in you, a ſincere friend and uſeful council, ſure, at once, of your not proteſting this draught upon a goodneſs, which, I am perſuaded, is inexhauſtible, and of its being hardly poſſible to find for you a more worthy opportunity for the exertion of it. Had not I been very clear, then, that

that both you and Clara would do honor to my recommendation, I would not have taken the liberty to trouble you with it. Richmond being at ſo eaſy a diſtance from the town, will occaſionally afford her a ready recourſe to you; and ſurely you would have been edified at the tranſports of gratitude with which ſhe received our concurrence to her wiſhes, and this addreſs of her to you, of whom ſhe has, with reaſon, the higheſt opinion, from the juſtice I have done to your character of untainted honor, and of perfect knowledge of the world, and all this yet more exalted by your great good-nature.

Agreeably,

Agreeably, then, to this determination the expreſs was ſent off with a moſt reſpectful anſwer from Clara to Lady Lovell, and a moſt tender one to Lady Harriet, in which ſhe excuſed herſelf for her ſuccinctneſs, on her unwillingneſs to detain the meſſenger.

Juſt at this time, luckily for Clara's deſign, Lady Proffer was on the point of returning to London, from a viſit to her ſiſter; and, on hearing of this intention, offered Clara a place in her poſt-chaiſe, which ſhe ſaid ſhe would not afford her gratis, that ſhe would not; for ſhe would be paid with a ſong. You know her oddity, which is very far from diſagreeable, ſince there is always good-nature at the bottom of it:

it: All we are in pain for, is, leſt the carriage ſhould break down with her weight of corpulence, to the enormous preponderance of which, on one ſide, Clara, with her ſlimneſs of make, muſt be ſo deficient a ballance. However, as one may ſay, the horſes are to, and go the journey ſhe will, not without leaving many an aching heart behind her, ours included.

You will now naturally ſay, that I have been writing you not a letter, but a hiſtory; nay, worſe than a hiſtory, a long panegyric; but this is impoſſible to avoid, while writing of Clara: Nor am I at all afraid of doing her an ill office by over-raiſing your expectation about her. I judged it neceſſary, becauſe reſpectful

ſpectful to you, to give you ſome idea of the perſon I was taking the liberty to put, in ſome meaſure, under your protection.

Yours, &c.

EDWARD MELLEFONT.

LET-

LETTER II.

CLARA MAYNWARING, *to Mrs.* ESTHER MELLEFONT.

DEAR SISTER, *London.*

AS you would doubtleſs take it ill that ſuch as are ſo admirably well united, I ſhould attempt to ſeparate, by my writing apart to Mr. Mellefont, this, then, and every future letter, is ever to be underſtood jointly and in common to you both. So that is adjuſted. I arrived very ſafe, and not in the leaſt fatigued, at Lady Proſſer's, who,

who, with a friendly violence, means to detain me two days at her houſe in the city, having ſent her coach immediately to Mrs. Buckley, with your letter and a note of apology from me, for my not delivering it with my own hands. But Lady Proffer tells me, Mrs. Buckley knows her too well to take any thing amiſs from her, for ſhe will have her way. In my hurry to ſee Lady Harriet, I could ill brook this retardment; but I do not know what it is to reſiſt the preſſure of a good-natured civility which one may feel comes from the heart; I would at any time rather ſuffer an inconveniency than give a pain.

A croud of viſitants coming in, to whom Mrs. Proffer, in continuance of that

kind tyranny of her's, inſiſts, I ſhould imagine abſurdly enough, on my doing the honors of her houſe, giving for reaſon that I am abſolutely the miſtreſs of it, I find I can, at preſent, have no time to beſtow on this letter the extenſion I could wiſh, for the effuſions of my heart to you. No matter; I know your goodneſs, and that you will give me, implicitly, credit for what I am thus hindered from ſaying; and ſure I am, all that I do not ſay, could not contain all that I feel of affection, gratitude, and reſpect for you. Embrace your little ones for me, and believe me ever,

Your obliged and
tenderly loving ſiſter and ſervant,
CLARA MAYNWARING.

LETTER III.

Mrs. BUCKLEY *to the Reverend Mr.* MELLEFONT.

Dear Nephew, *Richmond.*

I Write myſelf; I think myſelf extremely obliged to you for procuring me the knowledge of your excellent ſiſter; by what I can already diſcern of her, I had rather be her acquaintance than only her relation, but hold it a greater happineſs ſtill to be both.

On receipt of your letter, with Clara's note and Lady Proffer's invitation to

town, I immediately ſet off, and own to you, that all that you had ſaid to me in your ſiſter's favor, I found, at ſight of her, inferior to the reality. A more ſtriking figure I never beheld, nor certainly a more graceful one. With all the charms of innocence and ſweetneſs, you ſee her heart breathing in her every geſture, every motion, every word. Her reception captivated me.

You may be ſure I thanked Lady Proſſer for the kind care ſhe had taken of her in the journey, and for all her more than civilities. The groſſneſs of that woman's fat good-humor has to me ten thouſand times the merit of the delicacy of ſome of the quality's meager politeneſs.

I could

I could not get away till the evening, when Clara ſent a card to Lady Harriet, to acquaint her of her arrival, and of her being at Richmond with me, where I brought her to the apartment which I have dedicated entirely to her uſe, and ſhall keep ſo, that it may occaſionally afford her a convenient receſs; and I may add, a pleaſant one; as nothing can be imagined more agreeable than its ſituation, commanding, from the top of Richmond-hill, ſuch a proſpect as I fancy may vie with any that Greece or Italy can produce, the vales of Tempe and Arno not excluded. As there would be a kind of egotiſm in dwelling to you on all the ſatisfaction Clara expreſſed at taking poſſeſſion of the premiſſes, I ſhall lightly paſs over

that circumſtance, pleaſing as it was to me; but ſtill ſurely leſs ſo than that of finding, by the eaſe and freedom of her behaviour to me, that ſhe had penetrated the diſpoſitions of my heart towards her, and repaid me with all the overture of hers, in the ſpirit of congenial confidence and unreſerve.

The next morning, we had not done breakfaſt, before Lady Harriet arrived in a coach and ſix, to fetch away Clara. Their interview afforded a ſcene of great tenderneſs, and mutual regard, while Lady Harriet overwhelmed her with thanks for her obliging compliance with her invitation. Not having ſo much as ſtaid to take her breakfaſt in town, ſhe ſat down to it with us.

As

As ſoon as it was over, conſidering me as Clara's aunt, ſhe begged it as the greateſt favor, and with ſo good a grace that I could not well have refuſed her, that I would go to town with them, not only to ſee Clara inſtalled in the apartment ſhe had prepared for her, but to do her the honor of a commencement of acquaintance. In this particular, Clara's preſſingly joining her inſtances determined me, and accordingly we proceeded to town together.

But before I mention to you our reception, the concern you will naturally have to know the more eſſential particulars of the Lovell-family will give propriety to my prefixing ſum-

marily ſome account of what may, perhaps, have eſcaped Clara's knowledge.

I had no acquaintance with the family; but Mrs. Villaret, a worthy neighbour of mine, and a very ſenſible woman, is very intimate in it, and might have been more ſo, if her ill ſtate of health had not greatly broke off the intercourſe. She had often mentioned Lady Lovell to me, but never laid any ſtreſs on her knowledge of her, till I lately drew what information I wanted from her.

Earl Lovell dying about ſix years ago, left Lady Lovell with two children, a ſon, now Earl Lovell, who

who is about five and twenty, and Lady Harriet, who is many years younger.

The father was not, that I could learn, ever eminent in any thing, but was contented with being one of thoſe immemorables, or cyphers of high life, who, having no opinion of their own, go conſtantly with their party, right or wrong; whoſe names you ſee, indeed, in the liſt of the Peerage, but which are the diſdain of hiſtory, and the neglect of their own times; being hardly ever known out of an obſcure narrow circle of menial ſervants, dependents, or of the party in which they are liſted, made tools of, and deſpiſed: upon the whole, perſonages

rather negatively good than positively bad, and irreproachable enough for any thing but insignificance, or nothingness of character.

The mother, Lady Lovell, is principally remarkable for two passions, which she carries to the greatest extremity, a pride of quality, an arrogance of state, which dishonors her understanding, otherwise not a bad one; and a boundless fondness for her children, whom she idolises to that degree, as to have brought herself at length to believe that they are of a superior clay to the rest of mortals; mere earthen ware these, while her issue are the porcelain.

As to the son, Earl Lovell, whom by the by I have occasionally seen, he

he is rather handſome, not ill-natured, unleſs in his wit, but withall the moſt conſummate coxcomb that ever exiſted, and, to the ſhame of our ſex, only the more dangerous to it for the being ſo. He is now actually in Ireland, ſettling ſome intereſts in his eſtate there, but is hourly expected.

Lady Harriet, as to her complexion, is to the full as fair as Clara; her features not quite ſo regular, though, in their aſſemblage, extremely graceful and engaging: ſhe has that ſort of beauty that for its not making the violenteſt impreſſion at the firſt glance, ſurely revenges itſelf at the ſecond, by producing a ſelf-reproach for the injuſtice done it, and, upon examina-

tion, grows forcibly upon you. There is an exquiſite ſenſibility in her looks, which, joined to her great vivacity, tempts one to conclude that there is for her no mediocrity of happineſs, or of diſtreſs. She ſeems born for nothing but great pleaſures, or great pains. As to her heart, there is but one report about it, that it is an excellent one: nor ſurely is it a little prejudice in her favor, that all her mother's indulgences and blind fondneſs have not been able to ſpoil her. But the ſecret alluded to in Harriet's letter, is the ſecret of the comedy, for nothing can be more public than her engagement with the Marqueſs of Soberton, a young nobleman of great expectation, and who has

has a very good character, even though a nobleman. Notwithſtanding this is a match entirely the reſult of family-intereſt and connexions, in which little or no courtſhip has paſſed, Lady Harriet adores him. His father being ill at the Spaw, he is gone over to him, and, on his return, the marriage is to take effect. In the mean while, if I am not much miſtaken, the company of Clara is, as Lady Harriet herſelf ſays, a recourſe to which ſhe flies from the uſual anxieties of a tender love, ſeeking the relief of confidence in the boſom of friendſhip.

Such is the actual ſituation, as near as is neceſſary to be known, of the Lovell-family, from which I leave you to draw

what inferences you pleaſe, and come now to our arrival at Lady Lovell's.

Prepared as I was by the knowledge of her character, it was with much ado I ſmothered a ſmile at the ſtateli-neſs this Lady Dowager threw into her reception of us. There was ſomething ſo quaint, ſo formal, and ſo bridling in her manner, that I really could not help pitying an otherwiſe good woman enough, for being ſo exceſſive ridicu-lous. But Clara a Parſon's daughter, and I the widow of a country-Attorney, did not appear characters in life, with which a Counteſs was obliged to keep much meaſures; accordingly ſhe treated us with a fine air of ſupercilious civi-lity, every now and then checking her-ſelf,

ſelf, as if ſhe had been afraid of letting down her dignity by too great a condeſcenſion, and as if ſhe aimed at giving us to underſtand, that we owed the ſupreme honor ſhe was doing us, to her over-fondneſs in humoring her daughter's fancies; much in the ſame ſtile, as that of letting her have a doll, or any plaything ſhe might cry for, in her infancy. And yet, amidſt all the blindneſs of this abſurd aſſumingneſs, I could not help thinking that our behaviour rather diſconcerted her. On my ſide there was a coldly polite reſerve, with which I received all ſhe ſaid, that could not but partake of my inward contempt. But as to Clara, independently of the ſtriking impreſſion of ſo uncommon a beauty as her's, ſhe had withal

withal ſo truly noble an air, a countenance ſo ſweetly awful, that I could obſerve it was not, at length, without its effect on her. Lady Harriet, to her great joy, as ſhe told me afterwards, remarked it too. Upon the whole, however, we had no great cauſe to complain.

Our audience of introduction to the auguſt Lady Lovell being over, Lady Harriet carried us firſt to her own apartment, which was extremely neat, and afterwards to that allotted for Clara, which ſhe had ſome reaſon to object againſt, for being too magnificent for that ſimplicity of friendſhip with which ſhe wiſhed to be treated.

After

After dining together, in family, when Lady Lovell moſt graciouſly vouchſafed to deſcend a little more from her ſublime rank, I left Clara with her friend, and returned to my own houſe at Richmond, where I inſtantly ſat down to write you this, and to aſſure you of my being ever,

Dear nephew,

Your affectionate aunt,

LUCY BUCKLEY.

LETTER IV.

CLARA MAYNWARING, *to Mrs.* MELLEFONT.

Dear Sister, *London, Sept.*

AFTER seeing Mrs. Buckley's letter to you, I have very little material to add, except that I have all the reason in the world to be satisfied with Lady Harriet's noble and constant procedure towards me. Even Lady Lovell gives me all the marks I could reasonably desire, or expect, of her being pleased with her daughter's choice of a companion. There is, however, in me one

one great unfitneſs for Lady Harriet's confidence; ſhe is perpetually talking to me of her paſſion for Lord Soberton, and is amazed to find I do not enter into it with the ſpirit ſhe wiſhes. But this does not proceed from any objection I have to her taſte, for I never ſaw the Marqueſs, and have, from unprejudiced perſons, heard an excellent character of him; but, from my total unacquaintance with the ſubject of love, conſulting me upon it, is like talking to a blind man of colors. I have not any the leaſt idea of that paſſion, nor deſire to have it. It is not that I deſpiſe it, that I brave it, or give myſelf airs of defiance to it, but I heartily wiſh to preſerve my freedom, becauſe I find it ſufficient to my happineſs. The actual good

which

which I now enjoy, in a ſtate of liberty, may be, for aught I know, incomparably leſs than that which there is a chance of finding in a ſtate of love; but I ſhould imagine a certainty of content rather preferable to a contingency of happineſs: And, in the mean while, I have the ſame averſion for any diſcourſe of it being addreſſed to me, as upon any other ſubject of which I am totally ignorant, and wiſh to remain ſo. Lady Harriet, in her pitying me, reminds me of what I have read, in travels, of the inhabitants of the Alps, who look down with great contempt upon ſuch as have not their throats beautified with a wen. No matter; our diſputes upon this point anſwer her purpoſe of diverting herſelf, as much, and perhaps more, than the

the monotony of my agreeing with her: They ſerve to advance the clock, which ſhe tediouſly counts till the return of the Marqueſs. There is, however, one point in which I am forced to be inſincere with her, and that is, in ſuppreſſing a remark of Mrs. Buckley's on his Lordſhip's letters; a remark which, I aſſure you, would have eſcaped my inexperience, or rather ignorance of the matter. She ſays, that in point of ſtile, wit, politeneſs, they are admirably well written, but that there is not the ſhadow of ſentiment, nor a ſpark of love in them. I heartily hope ſhe refines too much; for, after all, why ſhould not he love one of the moſt amiable women in the world, and by whom he is ſo ardently beloved, that I really believe the bare

ſuſpi-

ſuſpicion of its being unreturned would go near to kill her. There is nothing ſurely I wiſh leſs, than for her example to afford me a triumph in that cauſe of liberty which I am defending againſt her. But, not to take up ſorrow at intereſt, let us wait events where nothing in our power can prevent them.

Yeſterday Lady Harriet's brother, Lord Lovell, of whom I had often hear her ſpeak with much affection, arrived in town, from Ireland. Mrs. Buckley was with us at tea in Lady Harriet's apartment, when he came in, and ſtaid a good while with us. He is, I hope, worthy of ſo good a ſiſter.

Mrs.

Mrs. Buckley ſays ſhe will write to you by this poſt, which encourages me to abridge this trouble to you.

Yours, &c.

CLARA MAYNWARING.

LET-

LETTER V.

Mrs. BUCKLEY, *to Mr.* MELLEFONT.

Dear nephew, *Richmond.*

EITHER my judgment plays me falſe, or the ſcenes to which your recommendation of Clara has introduced me, threaten to grow every inſtant more intereſting. The regard Lady Harriet has for Clara, has led her into the moſt unreſerved confidence in me. She takes to me the more for that diſpoſition to ſimpathiſe with her, which ſhe does not find in your ſiſter, who,

who, not having ſeen the enemy, as I have done, can give her no account of his marches, and manner of procedure. I ſhall with great pleaſure give up all the honor of ſagacity of conjecture, if her Lord ſhould prove as much in love as ſhe believes him, and is undoubtedly herſelf. I make not the leaſt doubt of his marrying her; that, it ſeems, is fixed; but to me every thing on his ſide has more the air of one of your common intereſt matches, in which Love, either on one ſide or the other, but oftneſt on both, takes his revenge for the not having been conſulted, by refuſing his ſanction to the ceremony. Theſe forebodings of mine, you may be ſure, I keep from Lady Harriet. Why ſhould I,

on

on doubts perhaps falſe and injurious, plant daggers in one of the worthieſt hearts that ever animated a human breaſt? Let that then ſtand over.

Yeſterday I was by chance witneſs to a not uncurious ſcene. We were drinking tea at Lady Harriet's, when one of the ſervants came in and told us Lord Lovell was coming; his mother happening to be out of the way on a viſit at Kenſington. We expected to ſee him in a travelling undreſs, being but a few hours arrived in town from Holyhead. But no; he was full-dreſſed for an aſſembly that evening at Lady Evergreen's, by an invitation that had met him twenty miles out of London. His ſiſter ſprung round his neck

neck to welcome him, and preſented him to Clara and me. I dare ſwear he took me, by my appearance, for ſome odd body, whom his ſiſter had picked up he could not conceive where, and put the full equivalent of that opinion into the looks with which he accompanied his compliment to me. No wonder. I heartily forgive him; for, between you and me, in my figure and dreſs, I had not amiſs the air of an old mantua-maker ſuing for cuſtom, or of a candidate for the place of houſekeeper to a city-alderman, on the recommendation of a new receipt for dreſſing turtle.

But when he caſt his eyes on Clara, who did not, I aſſure you, caſt her's

on him, but waited, with the utmoſt modeſty and the ſereneſt unconcern, to receive his compliment, the cavalier manner in which he had finiſhed his addreſs to me, and was beginning it to her, gave place to the heſitation of aſtoniſhment, and to the reſpectfullneſs of admiration. Preſently he recovers himſelf, and, as if he had meant to make himſelf amends for the awe with which ſhe had inſpired him, he threw himſelf into one of the arm-chairs with which the room was ſet, and, ſpreading himſelf out with the moſt eaſy familiarity, began to play off ſuch a battery of airs and graces, as, I dare ſwear, he expected would do great execution on the object, againſt which he directed them. Had you then ſeen Clara, you could

could not but have been edified with her behaviour. Inſtinctively guarded by her natural good ſenſe againſt all the falſe brilliants of coxcombry, ſhe baulked all his barbarous attempts at ſhining, with a moſt provoking and a moſt unaffected inattention and neglect. Yet nothing could be more intelligibly at once expreſſed, than her profound reſpect for the brother of Lady Harriet, and her perfect careleſſneſs about the very fine gentleman who was fluttering before her. At his firſt coming, he had ſpoken of his great hurry to go to Lady Evergreen; and yet he ſtaid above three hours with us, without he himſelf, I believe, obſerving this inconſiſtency. Lady Harriet, however, ſeemed to enjoy it exultingly; though, in my opinion,

there was one circumſtance greatly againſt her brother: ſhe had often ſpoken of him to me, but always with infinitely more of affection than of eſteem. So much is certain, that Clara, during the whole time of his viſit, took ſo little notice of him, that I queſtion much whether ſhe could have told the color of his cloaths, which were, to do him juſtice, very magnificent, and not abſolutely without taſte. When it ſo fell in her way to ſpeak, that ſilence would have appeared ill-breeding, or affectation, ſhe acquitted herſelf of her part of the converſation with the utmoſt delicacy, and with ſo much liberty of ſpirit, that he had not any the leaſt reaſon to flatter himſelf with his having added her to the liſt of his captives at firſt ſight. I

ſhould

ſhould be loth to riſk the wager of his not being himſelf her's, without himſelf knowing it. At leaſt there was ſomething ſo modeſt, ſo diſconcerted, ſo creſt-fallen in his air, at leaving us, that might authoriſe ſuch a preſumption.

No ſooner was he out of the room, than Lady Harriet, with great good-nature, and, I believe, great ſincerity, complimented Clara on a conqueſt the infallibility of which ſhe had anticipated: to this Clara returned no anſwer but a vague eluſive one, full indeed of reſpect, but withall ſo ſteeped in the cold of indifference, as if the object had been of no more account than catching a fly.

In ſhort, Clara appears to me ſo much more likely to be the ſcourge than the prey of a coxcomb, that I would, for a very ſmall premium, inſure her from the whole tribe of them.

Lady Lovel receives a great deal of company, and ſome of them perſons of real worth. Lady Harriet, entirely taken up with the thoughts of her future Lord, ſees, not only without envy, but even with pleaſure, as a juſtification of her choice, the diſtinguiſhed court paid to Clara, whom nothing but complaiſance for her could induce to accompany her to their drawing-room, being naturally averſe to mixed company. A multitude of lovers have offered

offered themſelves upon the moſt honorable terms, but Clara, who makes no violent declaration againſt a married life, and who, whenever the topic is brought up in a way that ſhe cannot avoid ſaying ſomething, always ſpeaks reſpectfully of love, though as of a foreign power, of which ſhe never wiſhes to be the ſubject; appears ſo utterly averſe to any engagement, and throws ſo repulſive a coldneſs into her air, as nips in the bud any attempt at a propoſal of that nature to her. Yet I do not think her inſenſible. On the contrary, whenever ſhe does love, I believe it will be with ſuch a fervor of paſſion, that the conſciouſneſs of her being liable to that exceſs, and her apprehenſions of her dangers from it,

make her keep ſo ſevere a guard over her heart.

It is with great difficulty we can get her to public places, where ſhe never appears without drawing a croud after her. But this inconvenience ſhe is too modeſt to give for a reaſon; nor do I believe it, even at bottom, the only one. She pleads a want of reliſh for them, eſpecially for their being ſtaled to her by repetition; the beſt, ſhe ſays, will hardly bear above once ſeeing, as there are few books that will bear above once reading. The ſeeing the company is no amuſement to her, and the being ſeen by it no temptation to a vanity which ſhe has not. Plays ſhe likes for the ſake of their

their ſenſe, and operas for the ſake of their ſound, being very fond of muſic, both in quality of judge and performer. As to cards, the reaſon ſhe gives for not having learned to play any game, is, that ſhe had no taſte for them; by which ſhe did not in the leaſt mean to impeach the taſte of others, but that having never wanted for ſomething, in her idea, better to do or to ſay, ſhe had never, for a recourſe againſt ſuch a heavineſs of time hanging on the hands, as ſhe had never experienced, been driven to a diverſion, which, abſtracted from the taint of avarice in it, ſeemed to her only a refuge from idle dulneſs into buſy inſipidity. She leaves, then, cards very contentedly to thoſe who like them, without blaming,

and certainly without envying them. And in theſe opinions ſhe is ſo far from giving herſelf a wiſe ſententious air, that they come from her in the ſtile of an apology for her ſingularity, and with greatly the more effect, for her ſo clearly poſſeſſing the rare merit of a total exemption from affectation, that tormentor of nature, that poiſoner of beauty, that murtherer of the graces. Having formed both her taſte and her heart upon the beſt models, ſhe has nothing to do but to abandon her words and geſtures to the freedom of their courſe. Thence every thing ſhe ſays or does breathes the ſweets of native ſimplicity, and ſtrikes with all the pathos of ſentimental energy. In ſhort, the more I ſtudy Clara, the more

I am

I am convinced of her being herſelf a fortune, and ſuperior to a title, though I am very clear of two points; firſt, that Lady Lovell would ſooner ſee her ſon married to a witch of quality, than to an angel in her rank in life; and next, that Earl Lovell is not capable of judging, or, at leaſt, of being captivated by her virtues. She may, and I do not doubt but ſhe already has, raiſed his deſires, but I much queſtion his being ſuſceptible of love, a defect which will eternally defend Clara againſt any danger from him. I have entered into theſe particulars to ſatisfy you of the motives of my ſecurity about her; for had I any the leaſt apprehenſions about her, I would immediately prevail on her to

remove from Lady Lovell's; but without ſuch a reaſon, it would be cruel to give Lady Harriet ſo great a pain, eſpecially as the proximity of the Marqueſs of Soberton's arrival will naturally bring on a ſeparation, without any violence to either.

I am yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

Lord LOVELL *to* HENRY GOLDING, *Esq*; *at* Chester.

London.

Dear HAL,

I Have not been above two or three days in town. But before I come to the point, which I have, at present, most at heart, let me dispatch two fools whom you laid in my way.

First, then, pray acquaint that mirror of knighthood, Sir Marmaduke Wormly, of my having, according to promise,

promiſe, tried the market, as to his chance of ſucceeding in his offer to the miniſtry, of ſo great a bargain as himſelf; and that the reſult of my inquiry is, that whether he is inclined to put himſelf up at public auction, or to ſell himſelf by private contract, he may find a purchaſer to treat with him. But this cannot be ſo well done without a little previous perſonal attendance at the miniſterial levee, or Statute-hall kept for hiring ſervants of all work; when you may tell him for his comfort, that nothing more will be required of him, than his having no character, and being qualified for no ſervice.

By going a little out of the road, I managed ſo as to call at your couſin Prim-

Primrose's, who, I hope in the Lord, is only your relation. I had alighted at an inn in his neighbourhood, and sent to know if he would receive my visit; upon which, after making me wait some little time, he came himself, drest at all points in form like Garter King at Arms, on a day of ceremony, and received me with such convulsions of civility, that I could hardly keep from laughing out in his pretious face, that little yellow shrivelled face of his, that looked like a dried mushroon. To his house then he insisted I should go, of which, in our way to it, he gave me as magnificent a description, as if it had been the palace of a Fairy Queen, with ten thousand bed chambers, six thousand saloons, three hundred and

sixty-

ſixty-five court yards, beſides garrets, cellars, cloſets, and cupboards. I could not imagine where this ſtupendous fabric could have modeſtly withdrawn from view, for it never entered into my head, that he was ſpeaking of a huddle of ſpit-over hovels, clapped together to form what he termed the ſeat of his illuſtrious progenitors, which ſtood, or rather was falling juſt before us. When I found my error, I bit my lips, to keep from laughing out, as I entered this manſion of the Primroſes. He carried me to his beſt room, where, in honor to his taſte, hung half-a-dozen villainous paintings, beneath the diſplay of ſigns in Harp-alley, and which he currently ſhewed me for ſo many Raphael's, Correggio's, and Dominichino's.

In

In short, I never saw a higher original except his old maiden sister, who keeps his house. I do not know whether she had any tender designs upon me, but surely a more ridiculous caricature of uglineſs and affectation was never exhibited than this Caliban in petticoats. It was about breakfast time when I arrived, and after being made to wait a great while for one perishing of hunger, madam made her appearance in all her powers of dress: but what with that winter-piece, her head, hoary with age, and frosted with powder, her wainscoat-face, and a white tabby gown with green sleeves and breast-knots, she reminded me of an old fashioned hall stuck with Christmas. But the infantine airs she gave herself, with

a voice

a voice as hoarſe as a boat-ſwain's, coming from an enormous mouth, ſtuck with teeth, ſet at diſtances, like mile-ſtones, almoſt took away my ſtomach. After breakfaſt, he carried me to ſee his damned cabbage-garden, with his ſuperb menagery, in which, by way of exotic curioſities, there was a mangy Iriſh wolf-dog, a ſtinking pole-cat, a ſick-monkey, a lame mule, a dumb parrot, a Friezland hen dying of the pip, and two Muſcovy-ducks mud-ſucking in a dirty puddle, which he dignified with the name of a canal. You may eaſily gueſs how theſe abſurdities delighted me: I verily think I ſhould have ſtaid to enjoy them longer, if I had not been in ſuch a hurry to get to town. I came away, however,

however, without doing your buſineſs; which, after all his aſſurances to you of getting it eaſily done, I ſoon found is no more in his power, than the crown of Poland is in mine.

I had another little affair of my own to ſettle at St. Alban's, where I ſtaid about four days, and received an invitation from that eternal hag, Lady Evergreen, to her aſſembly, with a ſhrewd hint of Mrs. Marigold being to be there, the once ſo much admired Miſs Bazin; who, in her luſt for money, ſacrificed the charms of an angel to age, diſeaſes, and impotency. She is now looking out, it ſeems, for a ſupplement to her dearee's deficiencies; but I am not her man. To me ſhe ſtinks of her huſband.

As

As who the devil would not have his ſtomach turned, at the thought of making a meal of what lies cold and malmed on ſuch a fellow's trencher? Yet I was determined to go, by the hopes of ſeeing that little flirt Jenny Perks there, to whom I had done the honor of having ſome thoughts of her, before I was ſuddenly called to Ireland, and ſo was forced to leave the reduction of the place unfiniſhed, though, I may venture to ſay, there were broad ſigns of a capitulation, which, I believe, will now come to nothing; for the reaſon you ſhall hear.

On coming to town, I immediately went to my own houſe, to dreſs for the aſſembly. I knew my mother was not

at

at home, but I propoſed a viſit to my ſingular ſiſter, who, you know, is ſo far gone in the ſentimental way: And whom do you think I found with her? An old good looking ſort of a decent Joan Douce, and a girl in mourning, of about fifteen. Ay! that girl! Hal! that girl is, at this moment, the lady of my aſcendant; in ſhort, I was planet-ſtruck. But, as inflammable as I be-ſpeak your pronouncing me, let me, at the ſame time, remind you of a juſtice due to me, that I am at leaſt too nice of taſte to be caught by a vulgar form. But this angelic creature it was impoſſible to ſee without a tranſport of admiration. A complexion dazzlingly fair, enlivened by the roſeate color of her cheeks. Then her eyes! — but I will not go on,

I ſhould

I ſhould loſe myſelf in a deſcription that muſt faint under the reality; yet, let me add, that all the exquiſite beauty of her features and ſhape, were nothing to the air of delicacy and of dignity which animated the whole. I gazed on her with ſuch intenſe rapture, as muſt have put her to pain, had ſhe minded me, but I never could once catch her eyes on me, though I did and ſaid all I could to attract her notice. As ſhe kept, for ſome time, an unbroken ſilence, I was in good hopes ſhe was dumb, or an ideot, that ſhe might have fewer arms againſt me. But my precious ſiſter, with miſchief, I believe, in her heart, was determined not to leave me that reſource, by directing diſcourſe to her, which could not but produce anſwers, and by turning thoſe

anſwers

anſwers into matter of farther queſtion, ſhe ſucceeded ſo far to draw her out of covert, as made me very clear that ſhe had a great ſhare of wit and underſtanding; nor a more melodious voice did I ever hear, than that which graced her utterance, and ſent every word to the heart. In the mean while, in honor to truth, I muſt ſay, that I did not, on this occaſion, make the moſt brilliant figure. By all I could gather from her behaviour to me, ſhe remained rather more heart-whole than myſelf. I could obſerve in her nothing towards me but the moſt eaſy unconcern, and the moſt chilling indifference. Patience! My day of revenge will come. Have her I will, coſt what it will. For, after all, what do you think this prodigy ſhould

ſhould be? A poor parſon's daughter, with a fortune, I ſuppoſe, of twenty pounds, from the feaſt, at St. Paul's, for the children of the clergy. My ſiſter dear picked her up, I am told, at a boarding-ſchool, and, I ſhould imagine rather unadviſedly, keeps her for a companion: But this will be very commodious for me. Yes, yes, I fancy a ſmall matter of courtſhip and a brace of thouſands will do the buſineſs.

However, one ſacrifice I immediately made, for on my leaving them, my propoſed going to Lady Evergreen's aſſembly was as much out of the queſtion with me, as the throwing myſelf into the river. I came home directly, and ſpent the remainder of the evening, and

a good

a good part of the night, in reflexions on the new conquest I was meditating, and in digesting my plan of operations against this fair enemy of my quiet. As to the issue, I do not greatly despair of it. Remember that I attack in a coronet, at the head of a good rent-roll, to say nothing of my having the authority of more than one lady, to write myself a pretty fellow. Yet, hang it, I do not know how it is, but I cannot jest with so good a grace as I wish, on this matter: I feel I am more in earnest than ever I was in my life; and, 'sdeath! why not? I never saw so fine a creature before. By all the powers of Love and Fortune, she shall be mine.

Mean while, Hal, I am terribly at a loſs for you. I have fifty acquaintances that are equivalent to the town-trumpets, for joining with me to publiſh the ſucceſs of an intrigue, but not one I can truſt to for aſſiſting me in the conducting it, in its infancy. In ſuch matters, you are my whole privy-council: and now you are unluckily out of the way, upon a wild-gooſe-chaſe after a damned lawſuit, which I am afraid will never come to good, for your lawyer here, that was, and whom you have left for one, who flatters your inclination without regard to your intereſt, inſiſts on it that you have not the ſhadow of right on your ſide. You may not perhaps, indeed, deſpair the more of your cauſe for that.

My

My next will, I hope, bring you advice of my having made some promising advances. Since I cannot have the benefit of your aid in person, I find at least some relief in this epistolar confidence, on a subject which is at present the sole business of my life. Can I live without having her in my arms whom I have eternally in my head?

Yours, &c.

LOVELL.

LETTER VII.

Lord LOVELL *to* HENRY GOLDING, *Esq*;

London.

YOUR laſt, dear Hal, treats my preſent enterprize with ſuch an air of compliment on the facility of it, as I would willingly take for a good omen, if unhappily my own experience, and, by this time, a better knowledge of the enemy, had not reduced the ſanguineneſs of my hopes, to terms of greater moderation. Yet were you even here at hand

hand to make your obſervations, I could forgive your being deceived by all the appearances of things in my favor, while I have an unauſpicious preſentiment that the bottom is clearly and deſperately againſt me.

It is now near a month ſince I have had as free an admittance to Clara as her ſtay with my ſiſter may be ſuppoſed to admit: and, to my eternal ſhame, I do not find myſelf one jot more advanced than at the firſt inſtant that my paſſion commenced. And yet, half this time, you well know, has heretofore ſufficed for me to bring down a counteſs, two baronets ladies, and the daughter of a country 'ſquire. It would be

pleaſant enough if I ſhould loſe all the honors of my generalſhip before a place, which one would imagine, at the firſt view, very ſlightly fortified: no dragons of relations, no jealous guardians of a great fortune, to take alarm at the approaches of an invader. Lady Harriet, who would not, ſo much I know of her, for worlds, contribute to the promotion of any deſigns, which would not be ſtrictly agreeable to her principles of prudery, and who, I believe, rather entertains, with regard to Clara, the moſt abſurd and chimerical of all hopes, that of my having deſigns of a more ſerious nature on her; a thought for which Lady Lovell would not very readily forgive her, if ſhe but ſuſpected it; Lady Harriet, I ſay, provokes

vokes me horridly with that perfect ſecurity and inſolent unconcern, with which ſhe abandons her friend, as ſhe calls her, to the worſt of my deſigns. But, what is yet more unauſpicious for me, Clara's conduct towards me juſtifies but too much this confidence. She does not ſeem to do me the honor of fearing me. She neither ſhuns me, nor throws herſelf in my way; and without ever ſeeking occaſions to ſpeak to me, when ſpeak to me ſhe does, it is always with ſuch an air of unconſtraint, ſuch an intrepid affability, as diſconcerts me a thouſand times more than ſhineſs, or reſerve. In ſhort, ſhe leaves to the moſt frozen, and the moſt conſtant indifference, the care to tell me on what terms I ſtand with her. It is true, ſhe

ſhows me abundance of reſpect, if that would ſatisfy me; but the vexation of it is, that this reſpect is much of the nature of that which ſhe pays to Lady Lovell; that leads to no other conſequence, than if I was her grandmother. You may gueſs how encouraging this is for me to enter on a declaration of love. I have tried often with her the old trick of taking circuits in converſation, to make it land at length on that ſubject, with a view to ſome overture of my paſſion. But of this ſhe has conſtantly diſappointed me, without any affectation of eluding my deſign, only by ſuch a ſilence as it might be ſuppoſed ſhe would keep on a queſtion of geometry or algebra being ſtarted before her. She is at no pains to ſhift the diſcourſe, for

ſhe

she takes no part in it; and lets it fall to the ground, without so much as a motion to take it up.

I happened one day, just as my sister was gone out of the room, and she was following her, to desire her, with a beseeching look, to stay, as if I had something very extraordinary to communicate to her, which, by the way, was the case; for I had really armed myself with resolution to break the ice, so far as a declaration may be called breaking it. On this intimation, she turned short upon me, with a look of emphatic severity; and, making a low curtesy, asked me if I had any commands for her; and without waiting for my answer, which she left sticking in

my throat, went out abruptly after Harriet. Nothing in the world could be ſo contrary to her uſual politeneſs, and therefore I have ſome reaſon to think ſhe had penetrated my deſign, and, preventively of it, did herſelf this violence.

Among my diſpoſitions to attack, it will be eaſy for you to think that I did not omit the old and ſo often ſucceſsful one, of preſents; but as I had reaſon to think ſhe would not accept any that were crudely offered to herſelf, I contrived, without affectation, an opportunity of preſenting Lady Harriet with ſome very rich jewels; of which, at the ſame time, I made it rather a point of breeding, than of gallantry,

lantry, to intreat of Clara her acceptance of duplicates of them, which I had prepared for that purpose. But even that scheme would not take; she refused them with the most polite and the most cold thankfulness; and with no other excuse, than that wanting nothing, she would receive nothing. Lady Harriet only shook her head, and said, "Poor brother!" and very currently took her share of the intended presents, but sent them back to me the next morning, with an ironical sneer, that she could not in conscience keep them, as my design in my generosity had so lamentably miscarried. I made, however, so seriously a point of her receiving them again, that, though with great reluctance, and for fear of an ab-

ſolute quarrel with me, ſhe conſented; but, in revenge, ſhe miſchievouſly thanked Clara for them, as it was to her, ſhe ſaid, ſhe owed them.

Such an incident would, with moſt women, have at leaſt done me no diſſervice, but Clara breaks all my rules of judgment of the ſex. I could, ſince that time, feel, in her behaviour to me, rather an increaſe of a coldneſs, which was, in all conſcience, great enough before.

You know the impetuoſity of my temper, and that to me, who am accuſtomed to ſummary proceedings, and to ſurrenders at the firſt ſummons, even a delay muſt appear a denial of juſtice

to

to me. My impatience then is put to a terrible trial, by ſo new and unaccountable a ſituation, that in all this time I have not been able to get ſo far as the initial ſtep of a declaration. At this rate, a man ſhould have a patriarchal length of life, to undertake an amour. By the time it would take me to reduce the place, I ſhould be too old to enjoy my victory.

I ſuppoſe I might come to my point inſtantly, if I could but prevail on myſelf to make honorable propoſals, but that I am not yet ſo far gone as to think of doing, even if Lady Lovell would give her conſent, to which, I am very certain, no earthly conſideration could bring her.

As

As much as ſhe doats on me, and as ready as ſhe would be to ſacrifice any point of intereſt to me, ſhe is ſo ſtark quality-mad, that my marrying any woman not of a titled family would go near to kill her. In this, her preſumable oppoſition to my playing the fool, and marrying, forſooth, for love, turns upon a very different objection from mine. I am not the bubble of any ſuch nonſenſe. Between you and me, and not to let it go any farther, I would at any time prefer the four quarters of pure fleſh and blood, of the humbleſt cottager, if ſhe was but handſome, to the ſixteen quarters of deſcent of a Princeſs that was not ſo. Even intereſt or fortune do not move me much. But

the

the truth is, that with the utmoſt paſſion for the ſex, I have an invincible averſion againſt matrimony; not from any great dread of an abridgment of liberty; for, I promiſe you, I ſhould make the yoke ſit as eaſy on me as an old ſlipper. And, indeed, to do juſtice to our times, the nuptial ceremony often ſeparates more than it unites many a woeful pair, by driving them more than ever into ſociety, as a refuge from one another.

To me the great plague of a wedded life is, that it ſets ſuch a damned ſheep-mark upon a man, as is very unfavorable to my darling paſſion for variety. Every woman

almoſt

almoſt to whom you make your addreſſes, from the fine lady to the pert chambermaid, ſends you, with a ſmart rebuff, back to your wife, or flaps you in the face with the wrong you are doing to your ſweet lady, your good lady, ſo that in pity to her, they pique themſelves on being cruel to you. Not that there are not to be found ſuch as will make no objection to you on that account, but then they muſt be either downright mean mercenary creatures, or ſome frightful ſtale women of quality, with whom one would not wiſh to avail oneſelf of their noble ſuperiority to a vulgar prejudice.

The married men too, theirſelves, have, in general, among the women, a ſort

a ſort of fooliſh inſipid air, as if conſcious of having forfeited that title to the univerſal joy, which is currently allowed to ſuch honeſt fellows as we that have grace enough to preſerve our liberty. Even the women of honor receive us more cordially, and look with a better eye on us, the pandours and huſſars of gallantry, than on the regulars of wedlock, to whom they ſuppoſe themſelves more indifferent than to us, who are known to be prowling about for plunder. For tho' a woman may be determined enough againſt making a ſlip, ſhe may nevertheleſs prefer thoſe, as affording her the greater matter of merit, with whom ſhe would be the freeſt to make the ſlip.

In

In ſhort, dear Hal, I cannot ſurmount my antipathy for the connubial ſtate; but could I even be ſo abandoned by my better genius, as, in a rutting-fit to ruſh upon matrimony, like Lord Pepperall, reeking from the ſtews, I do not know one in the world with whom I could ſooner commit ſuch a folly than with Clara.

Yet how to get her on my own terms, "aye, that is the queſtion?" Her uniform ſimplicity of principle confounds all the turnings and windings of art; and the worſt of it is, I ſee no glimpſe of hope of her departure from that reſolute evenneſs, that calm ſteddineſs, which one may plainly

plainly see in her, has even more foundation in character than in education.

With your noble way of thinking you will probably wonder that I have not recourse to some stratagem, or even violence, to get her person into my possession, and so take the shortest way with my fair dissenter. But those schemes of rapes, or running away with women, are, in the first place, what I have always detested and despised: besides, they rarely or ever answer the end, and, in this country especially, are next to impracticable. But as to Clara, for many reasons that I could give you, the probability of succeeding in such an attempt would hardly be less than that of a Sallee rover's cruizing

cruizing above bridge, and making prize of a Thames-wherry carrying a company to Vauxhall.

I could, however, as ſoon think of parting with life, as of giving over my purſuit: it is not even in my power, ſhe ſo engroſſes my whole ſoul. She is the center of all my wiſhes. In ſhort, I propoſe to leave nothing unattempted that can give me a chance of ſucceeding with her (take me right) in my own way.

There is a certain Mrs. Buckley who appears to me a deviliſh ſhrewd, ſenſible woman, and not in very affluent circumſtances. She is a kind of aunt or relation, by marriage, to Clara, and poſ-

ſeſſes,

ſeſſes, as I have reaſon to think, her confidence, without reſerve. Now it is not impoſſible but ſhe may be the weak ſide of this apparently inexpugnable place; at leaſt, it is worth trying: When, if I do not carry my point with her, I have one grand battery in reſerve, that I think can hardly fail; but that is a thought I hoard up like old gold, not to be brought out but as my laſt ſtake. In the mean while, I almoſt envy the happineſs of thoſe humdrums who are proof againſt the charms of variety: If they have fewer pleaſures, they have alſo fewer pains. You ſee how I am ſerved by my taſte for it: After having dragged me from change to change, it has brought me, at length, to my preſent diſtracted ſtate; between

a vio-

a violent paſſion for enjoyment, and a reſolution not to obtain it on the only terms I am afraid it is be obtained, and which, to encreaſe my perplexity, I ſee others ready to offer, whoſe pretenſions to title and fortune are very little inferior to mine. Hitherto I have only this comfort, that to my rivals ſhe keeps unalteredly the ſame tenor of coolneſs, reſerve, and diſcouragement, as to me. But then I tremble to think of the advantage their honorable deſigns, forſooth! give them over me, eſpecially with a girl of ſo moderate a fortune.

That pale, bloodleſs fribble, Lord Phillimore, with a very good eſtate, has not only to herſelf made propoſals

of

of marriage, with a jointure at her own diſcretion, but has got Lady Lovell to intereſt herſelf in his behalf, who was ſurpriſed enough at the offer, but ſtood petrified with aſtoniſhment at Clara's modeſt but firm rejection of it. Nor is this the only one, whom that matchleſs girl has treated ſo, without giving them any cauſe of offence in the manner of her refuſal, and eſpecially without herſelf appearing the vainer.

Mean while all theſe diſtinctions ſhown to Clara, begin to give Lady Lovell ſome uneaſineſs for me, by leſſening to her ideas that impoſſibility ſhe had always preſumed of my demeaning myſelf, as ſhe would certainly call it, in having any ſerious thoughts of one ſo much

much below me, as a poor parſon's daughter. This, however, is a folly which I forgive in my good lady-mother, in favor of the double uſe I may poſſibly make of it, towards accompliſhing my ends on Clara, and myſelf at the ſame time eſcaping the horrors of the nuptial chains. Good luck to the fiſh who runs away with the bait without being itſelf caught by the hook!'

Adieu! dear Hal, wiſh me death or ſpeedy victory.

Yours, &c.

LOVELL.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

Mrs. BUCKLEY *to Mr.* MELLEFONT.

Dear Nephew, *Richmond.*

YOUR letters* gave me great pleasure in the satisfaction they express at Clara's conduct, and at the constant eye I have to every thing that concerns her. I saw the last letter she wrote you, as indeed she has no reserves for me, and could not help remarking, that she

* Some letters, the receipt of which is mentioned in the course of these Memoirs, and which are immaterial to the story, are omitted.

defrauded you of a great deal of the pleaſure to find her ſo worthy of your good opinion, by that indifference with which ſhe ſlips over, without inſiſtence on points that moſt of our ſex would treat as the greateſt matter of boaſt, the number and quality of the lovers who have preſented themſelves, and whoſe ſuit ſhe has eluded, without giving herſelf the air of eluding them.

She has not, I find, ſo much as mentioned to you Lord Lovell among her admirers, and that for a reaſon which I fancy would rather gall his lordſhip, if he knew it; but, on this occaſion, his vanity remains, like a blinded huſband, unhurt by offences of which he is ignorant.

For

For thoſe of her ſuitors, who have accompanied their declarations of love with ſuch honorable propoſals as took away from her all right of complaining, ſhe has, I am perſuaded, all that regard, and even gratitude, that they could deſire, conſiſtent with her firm reſolution not to give her hand without her heart, which I am pretty ſure is hitherto totally free. But as to Lord Lovell, I could almoſt ſwear ſhe never threw away a thought upon him. In quality of brother to Lady Harriet, for whom ſhe has a boundleſs regard, he commands and obtains her utmoſt reſpect: But for any thing farther, I am very perfectly clear, there is not that man

on earth that is more indifferent to her.

Nor can I ſay I much condemn her. He is one of Fortune's ſpoilt children, his education having been like that of too many of our nobility, principally committed to a tutor, who, not having in himſelf a ſpark of elevation of ſentiment, could hardly communicate it to his pupil.

His travels, which, in the old rote, were merely matter of faſhion, had been little better than a ſilly, unmeaning ſcamper over Europe, in the courſe of which he had expoſed ſome of the follies of his own country, and brought back with him many of thoſe of foreign ones.

Super-

Superficial obſervations on things themſelves beneath attention, the fopperies of courts, the childiſh play at ſoldiers, in military raree-ſhews, or theatrical camps, with a liſt of the names of the moſt celebrated ſingers and fiddlers of Italy, and a vile jargon of the technical terms of painting ill-underſtood, and conſequently for ever miſ-applied, compoſed the whole ſtock of improvement, which, at his return, made him appear to his lady-mother ſuch a prodigy as princeſſes might kneel to, and kneel in vain.

To finiſh him, he fell into the rank with the reſt of his fellow-lordlings, and went ſouſe into all the miſeries which they have the impudence, or the

taſteleſſneſs, to call high-life; the noble ſphere of which conſiſts in ſelling themſelves and their country, like negroes, to ſome miniſter as worthleſs as themſelves; in cheating, or being cheated, at the gaming-table, or on the turf; in being lived on by their flatterers, poiſoned by their cooks, and cullied by drabs whom their footmen might diſdain. Not that, at bottom, Lord Lovell had not, with ſome wit, more hopeful diſpoſitions, but he was weak enough to be ſubdued by the inſtinct of imitation, ſo as to be drawn into the whirl of the current follies, and became good for nothing by the force of example. Nothing, however, more common than that flimſy pliancy, that imbecillity of character, which renders

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ſo many the victims of a falſe ſhame. They dare not break herd, afraid of the ridicule of idiots for not reſembling them, a reſemblance which one would imagine no great temptation. Is not this much ſuch an abſurdity, as it would be for a man in health, thrown by chance into a lazaretto of lepers, to dread their deriſion for not catching the infection, and for not having the honor to be covered like them with livid ſpots and loathſome ulcers?

Thence it is, in a great meaſure, that in conformity to the epidemical rottenneſs of the times, Lord Lovell, without the ſpirit to raiſe himſelf above them, without regard for the welfare of his country, which might

go to the devil for what he cares, without any paſſion for true honor, without ſo much as an idea of that heroic ardor which characterizes great men, is ſilly enough to forgive himſelf the wretched uſe he makes of ſuch great advantages, as birth, title, and fortune, and withall humble enough to ſit down, like ſo many others, ignobly in contented worthleſſneſs, and under the juſt reproach of having neceſſarily recourſe to trifles from a want of reliſh or capacity for great affairs. Alas! take from them their follies, their frivolous amuſements, what would you leave them? how would you fill up the terrible gap you would have made? Nature is ſaid to abhor a vacuum: if their minds are over-run with the vileſt

vileſt weeds, is it not becauſe their minds are not a ſoil for great ſentiments to grow or take root in? It is not that all, or even many of them, are ignorant of their duty, but they have a want of manly enough firmneſs in their character to purſue it: they know, perhaps, the value of all the virtues, without its being in their power to practice them; as a man may know well enough the value of a thouſand guineas, who cannot command a ſhilling.

Lord Lovell, it is true, ſometimes pays to vanity the tribute of attempting to gain importance, by riſing up to ſpeak in the houſe; but how he muſt acquit himſelf you will

eaſily conclude, from the following reflexion, obvious to common ſenſe, and applicable to numbers of his rank.

Let the frivolous object of purſuit, or fancy, of the generality of our lords or men of fortune, be what it will, horſe-racing let me ſpecify, for example, you will find, that after making it the buſineſs of their little lives, to paſs for great men in it, when they come to take it for their topic of converſation, all conſummately familiar as one would imagine it to them, they ſpeak upon it in bad language, and with worſe judgment, even pitifully enough to be laughed at by their teachers, the horſe-jockeys, riding-grooms, helpers, and boot-catchers.

catchers. Now if theſe great-men make ſo miſerable a figure on thoſe frivolous and favorite points, which they have ſtudied for years, and which are hardly above the loweſt capacity, what can be expected from them on thoſe great objects, the affairs of the of the nation, foreign and domeſtic, which they never ſtudied at all, and which, if they did, would more than probably be above their comprehenſion?

In the mean while, even their herding inſtinct is owing to their being neceſſary to one another. Uneaſy in company where they could not help feeling diſagreeably their inferiority, they ſeek for the mean deſpicable eaſe

and relief to their vanity, in aſſociating with ſuch as they cannot ſuſpect of giving them that pain. They live together, as women viſit, without a ſpark of friendſhip; they meet without eſteem, and part without regret. Pleaſure they worſhip as their idol, without one juſt idea of what it is, and ruinouſly ſacrificing to it health, fortune, and fair fame, fall theirſelves the victims of an unknown God. Taſte, you will ſay, is arbitrary, and that the pleaſure of the plough boy, who wiſhed to be a king, that he might ride upon a gate all day long, was as eſſentially pleaſure to him, as carrying a point againſt the country might be to a monarch, ſilly enough to have a ſeparate intereſt from it. True. But then the boy has not the

abſurd

abſurd impudence of demanding reſpect for his choice. I have no objection to a man's rolling himſelf in a kennel; but I ſhould wiſh he would not recommend it to me for a delicious bath. Then the miſchief theſe men of power and faſhion do by diffuſing their falſe taſte, and making it the common nonſenſe of a nation, is really no laughing matter, nor indeed a very triumphable ſucceſs even for themſelves. In extirpating all the virtues which make ſociety happy, ſuch as friendſhip, moral-love, generoſity, and love of country, to make way for all the mean deſtructive vices, ſelfiſhneſs, debauchery, avarice, corruption, theſe leaders of the multitude appear to me to act juſt as wiſely as the poſſeſſor of a garden,

a garden, ſtored with ſalutary delicious fruit, would do, who ſhould pull up all the trees that bore it, and fill his ground in their ſtead with a ſhrubbery of dangerous plants and noxious weeds, poppies, bang, hemlock, night-ſhade, and the poiſons of Marmol.

The times then had, no doubt, their ſhare in forming Lord Lovell's character. Among other choice inſtances of the humor and pleaſantry in vogue, that of bantering is in high favor with Lord Lovell, who thinks it great wit to make a common practice of it. It is ſomething in the low ſtile of your old college-wit of bamboozling, which being at length exploded at the Univerſity, is come to make its fortune

in

in town. The great joke is for one of theſe wits to deceive, and laugh at you for your not thinking him a knave or a liar. Somewhat in this way, Lord Lovell will take hold of the hand of any man, eſpecially of talents or of worth, who has been unfortunate enough to addreſs himſelf to him for a favor, and tell him, with a tone of the greateſt fervor and ſincerity, that "he wonders ſuch eminent parts "can be ſlighted—that the ſtate ſuf- "fers by not ſeeking out for ſuch men, "and employing them—that for his "part, he is ſorry for nothing ſo much "as its not being in his power to do "the juſtice he wiſhed to ſuch tranſ- "cendent merit." — The poor man, who is the butt of this barbarous at-

tempt

tempt at wit and humor, greedily devours this mockery, and does not ſee that my lord is enjoying his miſtake, and expoſing him to by-ſtanders, by winking with one eye, and tonguing out his cheek. Among others, he ſerved your friend Dr. Morell ſo, who obſerved it, and told me, he was horridly tempted to ſpit in his face.

He gives himſelf another air, which I own pleaſes me extremely, and that is, the declaration of an outrageous averſion againſt matrimony. For this I would even greatly honor him, if it proceeded from a principle of juſtice to himſelf, and of kindneſs to our ſex, in an unwillingneſs to make any woman of merit ſo miſerable, as a match with him

him could hardly fail of doing. But, no! the reaſon, according to him, of his deteſtation of the nuptial tie, is, that the name of a wife would be a dreadfull ſtumbling-block to him in his career of gallantry: and yet, if all his conqueſts are as untriumphable ones as thoſe I have heard of, I ſhould think he gives matrimony its full revenge for his railing againſt it. Theſe I mean are the ſtale battered Counteſs of Flauntantribus, of whom half the town had been ſick theſe ten years; two baronets ladies, the one parted from her huſband for being caught a-bed with his footman; the other, far from handſome, and a born ideot; and a country-ſquire's daughter, who had ſome time before come up to town

to

to lie in of a baſtard ſhe had by a ſtrolling player, with whom ſhe fell in love on ſeeing him maſſacre the part of Tamerlane in a barn.

Peace be to his Lordſhip, with all his equipage of conqueſts at his heels; but, without fee or reward, I could let him into the ſecret of the true reaſon, at bottom, of his indiſpoſition to matrimony; a reaſon which, probably, he neither knows nor ſuſpects; and that is, his moral incapacity for love. That paſſion, without being a ridiculous Platoniſm, which never exiſted but in the fancy-ridden head of ſome philoſopher, who having more imagination than judgment, left Nature out of the queſtion, in her favorite object of attention:

tion: that paſſion, I ſay, for ever, tacitly or expreſsly, includes a propoſal of its duration and conſtancy to the object of it, and thus combines deſire with the ſentiment that ſanctifies it. And this is ſo far from being an over-ſtrained or metaphiſical notion, that it ſtands inſtinctively the common ſenſe of mankind, where undepraved by falſe refinements, or ſuperior to the being driven, like mere brutes, by the ſenſual goad. To go no farther than our own country; you ſee not only in the rural ſphere of life, where innocence of manners moſt floriſhes, but even amidſt all the diſſoluteneſs of towns, the honeſt mechanic, the induſtrious tradeſman, the generality, in ſhort, of the people, hold it for a principle, to found

found their proſpect of domeſtic happineſs on this very combination of a paſſion for the enjoyment of the woman they like, with a wiſh of its ſettled permanency in a legal union. And this ſimplicity of view, which is, in fact, an inſtinct of Nature, may, in all ranks of mankind, from the King to the Shepherd, with perhaps different degrees of warmth and of delicacy, juſtly be called LOVE: A name, of which it is a proſtitution to give it to matches of mere convenience of families, of ſordid intereſt, or of a brutal appetite that looks no farther than a momentary gratification. In this, dear nephew, you are very ſenſible that I am launching out into no viſionary ideas; you are, happily, yourſelf an inſtance

of

of their being practically true. You, who furniſh, in your own procedure, an edifying example of the permanent bliſs to be found in moral love, a love approved by God and Man. But, to be qualified for ſuch happineſs, it is indiſpenſably requiſite to have a heart; now that is what Nature has refuſed to too many human creatures. And ſurely a man without a heart, is abſolutely, and in the worſt ſenſe, as diſqualified for the greateſt and moſt exquiſite pleaſures of love, as the guardians of a ſeraglio. Is not, to a true taſte, impotency of ſpirit leſs eligible than impotency of body? Or does enjoyment, without love, deſerve the name of enjoyment? In this light, which I defy any one juſtly to call a falſe one, how much

much would ſo many of our miſerable men of wit and pleaſure, about town, have to diſcount of their boaſts of having had a number of women as worthleſs as themſelves? In this light, I do not at all wonder at Lord Lovell's diſinclination to a ſtate, for which he wants the moſt eſſential qualification, that of the heart: an incurable defect, for which I ſhould think it as great cruelty to blame, or rather not to pity him, as it would be to laugh at or refuſe compaſſion to a man born blind, for his want of ſight. Beauty may give Lord Lovell deſires, becauſe he has eyes; but never love, becauſe he has no heart: he may poſſibly know the groſs pleaſures of ſenſation; but never the voluptuous raptures of ſentiment:

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by nature disinherited of the most exalted bliss that it is in her power to confer, he stands for ever condemned to a volubility of desire, like Sisyphus, from the bottom of a hill to roll a stone, that never reaching or remaining on the summit, but perpetually recoiling upon him, subjects him to an eternal fatigue in vain. He is bound never to rise beyond the animal gratification of an appetite, as distinct from the noble passion of love as vice is from virtue: an appetite that has no consistence: while inconstancy, produced by disgust, and by the weakness of a soul incapable of attaching itself to a worthy object, makes him the bubble of a sickly fancy roving from mistress to mistress, always coursing pleasure,

and

and never catching it, or at beſt a phantom in its ſtead.

Carried away by the ſubject, I was going on, when a caſual caſt of my eye, on the tremendous length of the preceding ſcrawl, admoniſhed me to conclude for the preſent; with reſerve to give you, by the next poſt, the remainder of what I have to ſay, where you will abundantly ſee the reaſon of this preamble relative to Lord Lovell. In the meanwhile, I am ever yours, &c.

LUCY BUCKLEY.

LETTER IX.

Mrs. BUCKLEY *to Mr.* MELLEFONT.

Dear Nephew, *Richmond.*

RESUMING the ſubject of my laſt, I proceed in the account I have to give you of Lord Lovell, by way of neceſſary introduction.

As if every thing had conſpired to give his head a caſt more wrong than perhaps nature meant it ſhould have, his evil genius betrayed him into the ac-

quaintance of one Golding, whom he picked up on the turf at Newmarket, and whom he took afterwards for his companion and confident; one who is infinitely worſe than a ſcoundrel erected into a gentleman, being a gentleman ſunk into a ſcoundrel. Nor will you think the term too harſh, after the fact I have to relate to you, which characteriſes ſtrongly this honorable friend and aſſociate of the right honorable Lord Lovell.

A little before I went to Cornwall, I had employed as a milliner one Mrs. Mabberley, a decent, ſober, induſtrious woman. She had often ſent home to me the little articles of her buſineſs by one of her journey-women, a girl of about

about ſeventeen, but one of the pretti-eſt creatures you can imagine, breathing the ſweets of innocence and youth, and withall ſo well-behaved, ſo ſenſible, that I could not help taking particular notice of her. Some years afterwards, when I returned to town, I let Mrs. Mabberley have my cuſtom again, and took occaſion to inquire what was become of her pretty journey-woman. Her anſwer was, that ſhe was a good-for-nothing huſſy, who had been drawn aſide by a vile fellow, one Golding, who had debauched and left her. This, I have ſince found, was the identical Golding, in ſuch high favor with Lord Lovell. At that time I thought no more of the girl, and was only ſorry that one, who had appeared to me to

deſerve a better fate, had not eſcaped a ſhipwreck only too common to afford much ſurprize. A few days afterwards, in a retired part of Hyde-park, who ſhould I meet with there but this young woman, dreſſed with great neatneſs and ſimplicity, with her child by that fellow, to whom ſhe was procuring the benefit of a walk and the air? At ſeeing me ſo unexpectedly, ſhe would have modeſtly declined any notice from me, and, for that purpoſe, turned her head aſide, and was paſſing on. I made up to her with all the encouragment I could throw into my looks and addreſs, and with really more of tender concern, than of an impertinent curioſity, drew her ſtory from her, which, on farther enquiry, I found to be exactly true,

true, except that, in her diffidence and modeſty, ſhe had done herſelf leſs than juſtice in certain particulars.

Golding had, it ſeems, taken the advantage of her youth and inexperience to ſeduce her to his ends, by all the uſual artifices employed on thoſe occaſions. By this means ſhe ſoon loſt her bread and ſervice at Mrs. Mabberley's, and being with child by him, underwent ſuch a ſeries of baſe, cruel treatment, as ended, at laſt, in a total deſertion of her and of her infant, whom he abandoned to all the miſeries of indigence, and to worſe yet, to all the temptations, with her youth and figure, to reſcue herſelf from the oppreſſions of actual want, by the horrors of proſ-

titution. Theſe temptations ſhe had the virtue to withſtand; and after a train of ſufferings, and ſevere trials of her conſtancy to her plan of a conduct that ſhewed how little ſhe had deſerved her firſt fall, eſpecially with ſuch a monſter, ſhe arrived, by induſtry at her needle, and by frugality of living, at a ſituation juſt eaſy enough for the maintenance of herſelf and daughter, to whom ſhe behaved with exceſſive tenderneſs, as if ſhe thought it incumbent on her to make her amends for the neglect of the unnatural father. Streight as her circumſtances were, ſhe denied herſelf almoſt neceſſaries of life to give her child the beſt education ſhe could. But what greatly charmed me in her was, the gentleneſs, the freedom from

from all acrimony, with which ſhe mentioned the wretch to whom ſhe owed her ruin, and for whom ſhe had ſuffered ſo many hardſhips, imbittered too by the reflexion, that it was through his baſeneſs that ſhe ſuffered them. All her reſentment was levelled againſt herſelf, whom ſhe allows to have been juſtly puniſhed for her fault, though ſhe might think it hard, that her chaſtiſement ſhould come from him, with ſuch atrocious circumſtances. I have reaſon to believe ſhe ſincerely deteſts any thought of renewing with him, and happily now ſhe owes to her good ſenſe, and to the merit of a long tried conduct, a condition that ſets her above any excuſe of bad circumſtances, to wiſh the reſumption of any connexion

with a wretch for whom her love muſt have been long obliterated by the juſteſt contempt.

This, however, is the pretious wight on whom Lord Lovell has ſo judiciouſly pitched for his confidential hanger-on, and of whoſe meanneſs in playing that part, it is not a little aggravation that he is not driven to it by want. He has ſome fortune, though perhaps inſufficient to his extravagances, to which his lordſhip's rewards for his ſervice to him in his vices and follies, may be no unwelcome ſupply. I never ſaw him, but your acquaintance Mr. Sutton, who, by the bye, carries on his buſineſs with great ſucceſs and reputation of probity, had a law-ſuit under his management, certain

certain incidents in the courſe of which gave him a thorough inſight into his character. You may, perhaps, imagine, that Golding muſt have at leaſt ſome talent, ſome accompliſhment, ſome favorable diſtinction, to recommend him to his lordſhip's countenance and intimacy. Nothing can be leſs the caſe. From a concern for a perſon ſo nearly related to Lady Harriet, whom I ſovereignly love and eſteem, I ſuffered myſelf to be told the character of one who has ſuch an influence over her brother. With a ſoul of an ether, coarſe enough to have been made out of the damps of a coal-mine, his whole flow of wit, humor, and pleaſantry, ſprings out of the kennels and ſinks of Covent-garden, in a courſe through

brothels, taverns, and night-houſes, of which it has gathered all the loathſom filth and offenſiveneſs. Vulgar and illiterate to the laſt degree, there would be no conceiving how he could have gained the confidence of Lord Lovell, who is, himſelf, not abſolutely without wit, but for his eternal applauſe and aſſent to every thing he ſays or does; for the wretch is ſo determinate a flatterer, that he would reprove the arranteſt miſer for being too extravagant, and the moſt abandoned ſpendthrift for being too ſtrict an economiſt; add to this, a conſtant readineſs without reſerve, to perform any dirty offices on which his patron may put him. In return for which, his lordſhip moſt heartily deſpiſes him, and is governed by

by him, without ſo much as ſuſpecting that it is he himſelf who is that low fellow's led-captain, and not that low fellow his.

Nor are you to think this ſtrange. Nothing is at preſent ſo common. It is even the general rule, for men of fortune and rank, to give their confidence to ſuch as they neither love nor eſteem, nay oftenеſt, to ſuch as they contemn, who generally return them the compliment, and, *in petto*, repay them in kind. In proof of this littleneſs in our pretious Great, take a liſt of them, I mean of thoſe in the higheſt claſs of life, for title, opulence, and power, and, on the faireſt examination, you will find that by much the

greateſt part of them, are reſpectively governed by ſome little obſcure wretch, who creeps about them, fawns upon, and flatters them in all their littleneſſes, follies, and vices: moſt commonly too he is the moſt palpably worthleſs of the whole herd of dependents, who are but the leſs jealous of him for his being ſo, nothing alarming the whole camp of them more, than the rare caſe of their maſter's ſhewing any favor or diſtinction to a man with whoſe merit their want of it muſt ſtand in the light of a diſadvantageous compariſon. There is nothing they dread ſo much, as the danger to them of their patron's favor getting into a channel different from that to which they owe that countenance to them, which is ſo much to his

his diſhonor and to his prejudice. For you need ſcarce look any further, for the cauſe of that ignoble, trifling, uneſſential figure, the generality of our great people make, than their meanneſs of taſte and ſpirit in not diſdaining to be the centers each of a little dirty ſphere of ſervile dependents, and nauſeous flatterers, who muſt be ſo far from making great a man intrinſically little, that they muſt make a real great man appear little, if it could be ſuppoſed that ſuch a character could make ſuch a choice.

I have known too ſome half-wits as fond of having a led-dunce as ſome ordinary women conſtantly take ſome fright

fright abroad with them, as a foil for the benefit of the comparison.

I have dwelt the longer on this reflexion, rather digressive, I confess, first because this epidemical weakness of the men, who have the lead in this country, must naturally influence the conduct of public affairs, and then because I really wish to extenuate Lord Lovell's folly, by shewing it to be partly the fault of his times, from the contagion of example. A candor in me, to which you will think him less intitled from my justice than from my contempt; when I shall have acquainted you with an incident, which alone might defend this long preamble about him from a charge of impertinence.

The

The other day, about noon, who ſhould come to my door in a poſt-chaiſe, and alone, but Lord Lovell? This was an honor I had no room to expect, from the reſpectful and cold diſtance I had always kept him at, notwithſtanding plain enough advances occaſionally made me on his ſide towards nearer acquaintance: advances, of which I had no reaſon to be extremely vain, conſidering their motive.

You may remember that I had very early obſerved his Lordſhip's being ſmitten with Clara, about which I was under no ſort of apprehenſion. I knew him ſuſceptible only of that kind of paſſion againſt which ſhe was more ſtrongly

ſtrongly guarded by principle, than even by the fear of a danger which was not a whit the greater to her, for her thorough contempt of it. Lord Lovell, finding in her conduct towards him ſomething ſo repulſive and diſcouraging as to give very little overture for any hope of ſucceeding eaſily in any deſigns of the nature of thoſe he was entertaining thoughts of upon her, did me, I ſuppoſe, the honor of caſting his eyes on me, as a relation that might be of ſome convenience to him, in the purſuit of his ends, from the influence he judged I had on her, by the great reſpect and confidence with which that amiable girl has conſtantly treated me. Of my ſituation in life, my figure was not at all calculated to give him a very brilliant

brilliant idea. My being always in one gown, and that a ſtuff one, with every other article of dreſs uniformly in that ſtile, would at moſt, to a man of faſhion, that is to ſay, to a man governed by appearances, ſuffer me to paſs for a decayed gentlewoman on the charitable liſt.

Lady Harriet, ſo far from undeceiving him, uſed to enjoy his miſtake. He had precluded himſelf from any participation of her's to him, even of the commoneſt occurrences of life, by conſtantly looking down upon her from the ſtupendous height of his own excellence, and ſuperciliouſly treating her as an odd, inſignificant girl, though ſhe has ten times his ſenſe, without one of his defects.

fects. She had often, with a ſmothered ſmile, heard him tell me to my face, with a fine emphatic tone, as if he was overwhelming me with honor, that he really took me for a mighty decent good ſort of a woman.

Heaven help his head! It was not for one of his turn to diſcover in that "good ſort of a woman," one who at one time, and before ſhe was led to a juſt eſtimate of things by a huſband, fortunately for her, a man of ſenſe, had lived not lower than on a line with perſons of the firſt diſtinction of the kingdom; to which I can ſafely add, that it was the very dulleſt part of my life; nothing being more certain, than that among thoſe of his rank I obſerved the leaſt

leaſt room for improvement, the falſeſt and moſt futile prejudices, the greateſt vacuity of taſte; a ſiſtem, in ſhort, only fit to ſet the head wrong, and to contract the heart. The only acquiſition I have to boaſt of among them, was that of a moſt meritorious contempt for them, on a thorough knowledge of them. Judge then, dear nephew, whether I made a ſacrifice that coſt me much reluctance, when entering, on the conviction of my own experience, into Mr. Buckley's ideas, I eſcaped from thoſe ſcenes of taſteleſs enjoyment and ridiculous vanity, into the ſnug of life, where, in the boſom of eaſe, tranquillity, and improvement, under the direction of one of the beſt of huſbands,

I paſſed

I paſſed the moſt delicious moments of my exiſtence.

But I aſk pardon while I dwell on this preliminary, I leave his moſt ſerene Lordſhip too long at my door: Let me introduce him into my parlour, where I was ſitting mobbed up, with a flannel pinned under my chin, for a violent tooth-ach, which did not, I ſuppoſe, extremely add to the awfulneſs of my figure, which was, at beſt, that of an old Fortune-teller. Neither could the appearance of my houſe, very ſmall, though neat, and choſen by me purely for its ſituation, combined with the furniture of the room in which I received him, the whole of which could not, at a fair appraiſement, amount to much above fifty ſhillings,

help

help to give him other ideas than thoſe he had brought with him, of that mediocrity of my circumſtances which he was come moſt nobly prepared to inſult, and to turn to the account of his villainous purpoſes.

After the uſual ſalutations, and ſome ſilly enough humming and hawing, he began:

"Why, you have got here a good "pretty kind of a habitation — Let "me ſee; the rent cannot, I ſhould "think, be very high. Indeed, the "ſituation is ſomething. Upon my "word, Mrs. Buckley, a woman of "your merit ought to have greater

"matters

" matters done for her. I have always " thought you a very valuable perſon."

To this, and much of the like, no anſwer from me, except, now-and-then, " I thank your Lordſhip — You are " very good—To be ſure the times are " rather hard"—And all this with ſuch a profound air of, yes and pleaſe you, to every thing he ſaid, as helped to draw him finely out to the point at which I wanted him, an explanation of the motive of this viſit. This was ſtrictly poetical juſtice; a banter of him in his own way.

Not to waſte paper and time, I ſhall only give you a ſummary view of his buſineſs with me.

He

He had long entertained very ſerious thoughts of my niece, (as he called her, from his having heard her give me the appellation of aunt,) and had nothing but honorable intentions towards her. (In which I have pregnant reaſon to think he lied.) That his mother's oddity of temper could not be unknown to me, the meaſures he was obliged to keep with which were the only cauſe that he did not make his declaration more public—That being but too ſure that he could never obtain her conſent to a match, in her way of thinking, ſo diſproportionate, he could not well venture to diſoblige her, as ſhe had ſtill a great deal in her power. (This is true.) That, in the mean while, he

was

was dying of ardor and impatience for obtaining the poſſeſſion of Clara, whom he would in all reſpects conſider and treat as his lawful wife; and as an earneſt of his honorable intentions, would immediately ſettle ſix hundred a year upon her for life: that he was afraid it would not be eaſy, indeed, for him to bring her to acquieſce in ſuch an arrangement, which he propoſed ſhould laſt no longer than till the benefit of time and events ſhould put it into his power to prove the legitimacy of his paſſion: that, for my part, he ſhould not, as an acknowledgment for any good offices I might do him on this occaſion, ſcruple a thouſand pounds, which were ready at my ſervice as barely a retaining fee.

Obſerve,

Obſerve, that I abſtract to you the ſubſtance of his propoſal, but ſpare you the preambles and circuit of words which he employed to gild the pill to me.

The truth is, that, at firſt, I did not conceive his drift. I imagined he was aiming at ſomewhat in the nature of a clandeſtine marriage, which, however undoubtedly unacceptable, would not, at leaſt, have been ſo groſs an affront. It was then, without deſign, on my part, and purely in a ſpirit of explanation, that, by dint of doubts and leading queſtions, into which I took ſpecial care to throw no diſcouragement that might have ſhut him up to me, I came at length, to an aſ-

certainment of his meaning, which was, that all his honorable propoſals were reducible to the terms of Clara's being his miſtreſs, upon honor, and I his procureſs, for hire.

You cannot conceive how much the impudence and abſurdity of this overture diverted me. My ſenſe of it was abſolutely nearer to pity than to reſentment. But I took care not to die in his lordſhip's debt.

Compoſing then my countenance to the higheſt expreſſion I could throw into it, of mock-gratitude and ironical ſubmiſſion, I made his lordſhip a curteſy down to the ground, and told him, that I conſidered myſelf as under

an

an immortal obligation to him for his charitable intentions, in ſingling me out for his ſervice on ſo delicate a commiſſion—That I ſhould immediately enter upon it by acquainting Lady Harriet, and eſpecially Clara and her friends, with the generoſity of his flame, and the purity of his deſigns: that I made no doubt of Clara's jumping at the offer, and of her impatience to qualify herſelf for touching the firſt quarter of her honorable penſion; but that as he was ſo pretty a man, I ſhould think her unconſcionable if ſhe did not take that into the account, and afford him a cheaper bargain: that for my part, I would ſo far ſet her a good example, that I would give up the brokerage he was pleaſed to offer me; nay, that

if his lordſhip wanted a couple of thouſand pounds, if he would ſend his ſteward to treat with me, I was ready to lend it him at three and a half per cent.

You are ſenſible, dear nephew, there was no gaſconade in this proffer. I have a much larger ſum by me, which I hardly know where to place out. My paſſion for that ſimplicity which I conſider as the ſtandard of taſte, and the true ſublime of life, brings with it a ſaving, for which I ſhould have the greateſt contempt, was the œconomy I obſerve to ſpring from any thing ſo ſordid as avarice. As it is, I do not ſpend a third of my income, which enables me to make reſerves that may ſerve

others,

others, without occaſioning me any ſelf-denial, or ſelf-reproach for meanneſs of ſpirit.

However, before I had well done ſpeaking, and I had ſurely coolneſs enough not to loſe any of the degrees of impreſſion that what I ſaid was ſucceſſively making on him, I could diſtinctly obſerve the progreſſive growth of his confuſion, rage, and ſhame to their utmoſt pitch. Confounded at the turn againſt him his application to me had taken, enraged at the cool contemptuouſneſs of the irony with which I was treating him, and aſhamed of the wretched figure he was making in the eyes of one he had begun with addreſſing himſelf to, as to an object of charity, he ſunk under the

ſuperiority which his ridiculous miſtake of me had given me over him.

The point with him now was to recover ſo terrible a ſtumble with the beſt grace he could. For ſome minutes he continued ſtunned, and incapable of uttering a ſyllable. At length, getting a little the better of his oppreſſion, he told me, with a faultering voice, and a tone of humiliation, that he ſaw he had taken a very fooliſh ſtep; that he ſincerely aſked my pardon, and entreated me to conſider that his puniſhment was in my hands, and that as he lay entirely at my mercy, he hoped my generoſity, and his unfeigned ſorrow for his offence, would induce me to ſpare him; that as to Lady Harriet, my threat of acquaint-

ing

ing her of his folly, affected him incomparably less, than Clara's receiving any ill impressions of him; that he was but too sensible that much of his fate depended on my not doing him with her all the diskindness he had deserved, especially from me: but as to herself, he was resolved to repair the injury in a manner that should convince me, that the bottom of his intentions was purer than what that step he had just taken gave them leave to appear; a step into which he had been betraid rather by the blindness and impetuosity of his passion, which had hid the irregularity of it from him, than by a dishonorable design.

This was the ſum of his apology, of all which I had to believe as much or as little as I pleaſed. I knew too well the nature and tendency of the inſinuation of his intention to repair the affront to Clara, to give him any the leaſt credit for it.

I replied to him then in an extreme polite ſtrain, but as vague, and death-cold an one, as the holloweſt, ſmootheſt courtier could have employed, to elude an explicit declaration. I ſuffered him to go away, under a perfect uncertainty of what my procedure would be upon this curious piece of conduct of his.

As ſoon as he was gone, the firſt idea that naturally preſented itſelf, was

to

to write immediately to Clara a ſuccinct account of what had paſſed; the weather being too bad for me to go in perſon, under the pain I was in. About this there was no difficulty: but I much wiſhed to ſpare Lady Harriet the cruel uneaſineſs I was ſure that her brother's procedure would give her. I was afraid too, that Clara herſelf might, in the firſt emotions of her wounded delicacy, think it incumbent on her to remove directly from Lady Harriet's, to whom the abruptneſs of the ſtep, combined with the cauſe of it, could not fail of giving a great deal of pain. As I was then perfectly clear that there was no danger to Clara, with her way of thinking, from her continuing a little while longer with Lady Harriet, and that her coming

away might imply to him ſuch a fear of his deſigns, as ſhe was much above having; I had, to her ſtaying at Lady Lovell's, till the Marqueſs of Soberton's imminent arrival, but one objection, which was the poſſibility of Lord Lovell's imagining that ſuch her continuance after ſo great an indignity, which he would naturally judge I could not well anſwer ſuppreſſing to her, was a kind of laying wait for his effectuating that reparation which he had inſinuated to me, by a declaration in form of more honorable intentions. However, this objection I ſoon ſolved to myſelf, by a reflexion on the groundleſſneſs of ſuch a preſumption in Lord Lovell from what I knew of my own ideas, and had the ſtrongeſt reaſon to believe of Clara's.

I con-

I conſidered, that it would be great injuſtice to give the worthy, the amiable Lady Harriet unneceſſarily great pain, for fear of any vain and falſe notion of her brother's. There is not, perhaps, a more pernicious, nor a more common error, than the doing or not doing a thing, out of regard to the opinion of fools, which by the by is doing them rather too much honor.

In theſe ideas, I ſat down to give Clara the neceſſary and very candid information of Lord Lovell's procedure, and withall my opinion for her not coming away immediately, and my reaſons for that opinion, which, however, it was abſolutely at her option to follow or not, as I was ever ready to

receive her with open arms. This letter I ſent by a ſpecial meſſenger, my own maid, ſo as not to be delivered in Lady Harriet's preſence, to prevent any reſerve which the novelty of it between them would render very aukward, and againſt which I eaſily guarded my ſervant by equipping her with a collateral pretext.

In the afternoon I received by the return of the meſſenger Clara's anſwer, of which I encloſe you the copy.

Yours, &c.

LUCY BUCKLEY.

LET-

LETTER.

CLARA MAYNWARING, *to Mrs.* BUCKLEY.

" *London.*

" *My ever reſpectable Aunt,*

" AFTER expreſſing to you my " pain for the indignity you have met " with on my account, a pain much " leſſened to me by my reflexion on " your ſuperiority to it, ſuffer me to " give to a very ſincere friendſhip the " firſt place in my expreſſions of grati- " tude to you, for your tender concern " for Lady Harriet on this occaſion. " Nothing can be more juſt than your " apprehenſions for her: nothing more " merited than your unwillingneſs to

" give

" give her unneceſſarily cauſe of pain.
" In honor to truth, I muſt confeſs, that
" I ſhould moſt probably on the firſt
" ſenſe of the inſult done to you, (for
" as to myſelf, my Lord Lovell can-
" not offend me,) I ſhould have en-
" deavoured to make Lady Harriet
" ſenſible of the propriety of my leav-
" ing her, without any thing in my
" heart towards her, but ſentiments of
" the utmoſt affection and eſteem. I
" am, I hope, incapable of ſuch an
" injuſtice as that of imputing to her,
" as any demerit, thoſe follies or indiſcre-
" tions of a brother, which ſhe would
" be the firſt to deteſt and deplore.
" Be it then as you have better judged.
" Lord Soberton will certainly ſoon be
" here, by his father's orders, who is

" in

" in a fair way of recovery. The " celebration of his nuptials with Lady " Harriet will naturally bring on a ſe- " paration without any violence. The " reſt of the time, till my return to my " brother Mellefont's, in the country, " as I originally propoſed before the " ſummer comes on, I ſhall, with your " leave, ſpend with you, to my great " improvement, I am very ſure. In " the mean while, I ſhall conceal from " Lady Harriet an incident that would " give her ſo great an uneaſineſs: it " is the only kind of perfidy of which " my friendſhip for her is capable.

" Yours, &c.

" CLARA MAYNWARING."

LETTER X.

Mr. MELLEFONT *to Mrs.* BUCKLEY.

Lancaſhire, Nov.

My ever honored Aunt,

YOU cannot conceive what pleaſure your letters have given my wife and me, except juſt in that part where we felt for the indignity of your treatment; which, however, you are ſo right to treat with the ſcorn and deriſion it deſerves. As we unfeignedly join in our full ſatisfaction at Clara's having the happineſs of your counſels at hand, and the good ſenſe to reſpect them:

them: we are not in any the leaſt pain about the iſſue of Lord Lovell's deſigns, whatever they may be: with ſuch a pilot as you, there is no fear of a ſhipwreck.

But if I ſincerely pity Lord Lovell for his not being above the worthleſſneſs of his times, I hope I may have leave to pity my country much more, for the danger of ruin to which it ſtands expoſed, in having it's fate depend on no better heads and hearts, than thoſe of the generality of the people of power in all parties. Nor do I ſee any likelihood of an amendment, unleſs a few men of good ſenſe, and real well-meaning, with the requiſites of rank and fortune to give their operations

rations due weight, ſhould riſe to the reſcue of the nation from the prevalence of all the futility and corruption under which it is evidently ſinking. But if it is too much, or too chimerical to ſuppoſe, that there are a few ſtill remaining capable of ſuch an effort of virtue, I hope no one will ſay that ſuch a country does not deſerve its perdition, and that the chimera would be not to beſpeak it.

And here ſuffer me to offer you a few remarks on our titled nobility, which, as I principally derive them from the information of Mr. Buckley, who, I am ſenſible, thought no ſubject of this kind above your comprehenſion,

henſion, will be rather reminding than preſuming to inſtruct you.

The great authority, then, of our nobles was unqueſtionably owing to their official duty, conſidered in two lights, that of Judges, Guardians of the Law, and Counſellors to the Throne; and that of Defenders of their country againſt enemies foreign and domeſtic.

In their judiciary capacity they conſtitute the upper houſe, where they ſit merely in the civil character of Judges, under the titles of Lords or Barons, both which have no relation to any thing but the Law: the word Lord importing a Magiſtrate, and Baron a Judge; Barony a diſtrict of civil government,

vernment, in former times feudally liable to furniſh its contingent to the national ſervice. In their military province they have other titles, which are an ingraftment on thoſe of Lord or Baron; ſuch as Duke, Marqueſs, Earl, &c. which are deſignations of martial rank, thoſe diſtinguiſhed by them being originally bound to perſonal ſervice, receiving for their pay certain allotments of lands, which they poſſeſſed by feudal tenure.

You have here their office in one plain, ſuccinct view. They were the firſt in the land for law and arms. Are they, in reality, the firſt in either now? Or is it not a moot-point, whether they are better lawyers in the houſe, or better

ſoldiers

ſoldiers in the field? Perſonal ſervice in war they have long, in general, renounced, and left to younger brothers, and to any military adventurers, for a livelihood; content, for themſelves, to carry arms no where but on their ſeals, plate, or coach-doors, leſs as enſigns of honor, than matter of a taſteleſs parade. But then, you will ſay, they have ſtuck the cloſer to their civil character of Judges, of Comptrollers of Miniſters, and Counſellors of the State. May be ſo.

As to their being Judges; it is their eſſential prerogative to be ſuch; and they, no doubt, qualify themſelves duly for the diſcharge of that great and reſpectable office.

In their political character of Directors of Miniſters, I am afraid that, in former times, Miniſters may have too often

found them readier to pay a court to them, than to correct them.

As Advisers of Kings, it is, perhaps, to be wished, that, instead of concurring with them, to plunge the nation unnecessarily into debt, they had less respected those passions and weaknesses of theirs, which were the causes of that debt, of which so great a part has been incurred in a direct opposition to the national interest; so that the worst was not the act itself of increasing the debt.

And here there occurs a not uncurious remark, which I do not care whether any one has made before me or not, so it is but a true and a just one.

In the earliest ages of Britain and of Gaul, long before Julius Cesar actually destroyed the liberty of one, and laid the foundation of destroying the liberty of

of the other, as he too fatally did that of his own country, the power of the Law was predominant over that of the Sword, which was nothing more than executively its miniſter. But the guardianſhip of the laws made in the popular aſſemblies, was truſted to the Peace-officers; a deſignation I prefer to the word Clergy, (which, in thoſe times, long prior to Chriſtianity, bore quite another conſtruction than it now does; that I may not appear partial to my own order.) However, by various revolutions, the Sword at length prevailed. The power was wreſted out of the hands of the Law, and put into thoſe of the military, who to trial by Courts and Juries ſubſtituted that of judiciary Duels, on the abſurd barbariſm of which it is ſuperfluous to inſiſt. In the antient ſiſtem, the Man of Learning and

the Judge were united; in the subsequent one, the Soldier and the Judge. But how far our Nobles maintain either the judiciary or the military character, let those who know them best determine.

To me our Lords in general appear somewhat like the French *Abbés*, who, having renounced the graver functions annexed to their primordial institution, constitute a kind of body, of which the greatest privilege seems to be that of doing nothing, and of circulating, in society, their sad inutility. By this means those *Abbés* have lost much of their dignity, nothing being more conformable to the principles of equity, than that whoever withdraws from the performance of those duties, for which they are allowed a consideration, lucrative,

tive, or honorary, or both, ſhould inconteſtably forfeit ſuch conſideration. Where then any claſs of men falls under that deſcription, if they are not dead in law, are not they manifeſtly ſo in equity? Who is not ſenſible, that a body from which the ſpirit is departed, does not preſent an idea of great ſweetneſs?

Nothing is more demonſtrable, than that originally moſt of the lands of the nobility were as purely military benefices as biſhopricks were eccleſiaſtical ones, both ſubject to a diſcharge of their reſpective duties, and neither of them hereditary.

At length, indeed, the French ſet us the example, which it was natural enough for the Barons, (who in their double quality of Judges and Generals had both the Law and the Power in their own hands,) to follow, of changing the nature of the military benefices and titles, and of making them like allodial eſtates, tranſmiſſible by inheritance. But even then it was not underſtood, that ſuch a right of deſcent ſhould abſolve them from the diſcharge of thoſe duties, for which the revenues of their eſtates were conſidered by the whole nation as ſtanding ſalaries. A Duke, even on this new footing, was a born Leader of an army; an Earl or Count a General, a Vice-count a Lieutenant-General, and ſo on;

on; but every one of these titles implied a duty of actual military service to the public. Nor indeed could any dispensation from it take place, with more propriety, with more justice, than if our lords the Bishops were very gravely to bring in a bill into the house, for leave to entail their titles and temporalities in their families, without any incumbence on them to discharge the episcopal duties.

So that, in strict fact, our Nobles hold their advantages of fortune and honor less by the spirit of the law, than by its prescriptive connivence at such a sine-cure tenure, as is very different from the original institution, and even from the first alteration of that

inſtitution. Nor could the nation, in its grant of land for actual ſervice, or even for reward of paſt ſervice, ever be imagined to include, in the idea of reward, a birth-right to the deſcendants, from thoſe ſo paid or rewarded, of lying an uſeleſs inſignificant load on it; or intend, as matter of claim for them, the privilege of worthleſſneſs, and the mockery of empty titles of a military ſervice, which they never perform, and which they leave to others under the modern denominations of General, Lieutenant-general, Brigadier, &c. who have juſt as clear a right to expect that their pay, ſubject to no diſcharge of duty, ſhall be made hereditary in their families, as the merely titular officers of the nobility ever had to

to procure, as they actually did procure their feodal tenures to be; the ſervice for which they have ſo prudently commuted for only paying their ſhare of the general taxation.

Of this our Nobility could not be too much reminded, even for their own ſakes, as it might tend to excite in them a ſpirit of gratitude to a country, by whoſe curteſy they are allowed the *uti poſſidetis* of ſo many gratuitous advantages. It might kindle a deſire in them to merit, by ſome degree of utility to the public, that reſpect which they cannot otherwiſe claim with the beſt grace imaginable, eſpecially while it is hardly poſſible for others to pay leſs of it to them than they do to themſelves: it

might rouze in them a noble diſdain of any honor but what is intrinſically honor in itſelf, in a juſt diſtinction of it from that contemptible ſpurious honor, which has no better foundation than a preſcriptive error of opinion and vulgar prejudice.

As it is, how very few of them are there, that do not acquieſce in the moſt ignoble obſcurity! poor immemorable inſignificants, content with never being named among thoſe who defend their country with their arms, or proſper it with their counſels! Does their auguſt body, in fact, form, now-a-days, many very great Generals to command armies, many Speakers of real eloquence in the houſe, or many Stateſmen of abilities to take

take charge of the national power, or care of the public intereſt? Is not there rather a deplorable ſcarcity of all theſe? You cannot but ſee, eſpecially as to the offices of government, the diſtreſs to which this country is reduced for ſupplying proper perſonages to fill them. Many have been called Miniſters, but how few of them were choſen! ſome having born that name, who were no more of the ſtandard of capacity requiſite for the conduct of affairs, than the obſidional coins of copper are of a metal anſwerable to the value ſtamped upon them, by authority, both, for want of better, owing their temporary currency to the urgency of neceſſity.

Nor is it a wonder that places ſhould be ſo contemptibly *not* filled, while rank avarice, without a ſpark of honor

or of patriotiſm, is the principal motive of courting, or of accepting employments: Avarice, that execrable paſſion, allied to every meanneſs, and which gives a rage for power to none more than to thoſe who are the leaſt capable of doing juſtice to it.

But if ſome of our Great would but calculate the worth of what they loſe of real good and ſolid ſatisfaction, by ſuffering themſelves to be blinded by a ſordid ſelfiſhneſs, which not only undignifies them, but endangers their much ſuperior intereſt in the public welfare, they would ſpurn the idea of any complaiſance to a Court, at the expence of their duty; nobly juſt to which, they would, in fact, do much

greater

greater ſervice to their country, to their King, and even to themſelves.

As things are, the corruption of the men of power is arrived at ſuch an incredible pitch of profligacy, that there are ſome of them, who make it a point of their importance to be paid not only for the good they do not hinder, but for the miſchief they do not do to their country. Figure to yourſelf the meanneſs of ſuch as can hug themſelves not only on what they ſave by not doing a good action, but on what they get by a bad one.

Theſe reflexions, however, are extorted from me by my ſincere regard for that part of our conſtitution, againſt which it can ſurely be no offence, to

wiſh it more eſſential, more eſtimable; their political life and dignity capitally depending on their degree of conſideration with the public, which always meaſures its eſteem of men and things by their utility to it.

You may alſo ſee by this, dear aunt, that I am not likely to be dazzled by any offers, however honorable, that may come from the Earl Lovell, merely in his quality of Lord, for which, ſingly conſidered, I neither eſteem nor deſpiſe him. It is not in his title, it is not in opulence, but in his character that Clara is to find her happineſs: and I am much miſtaken, if ſhe is ever, Atalanta-like, lured out of

of her career of honor and prudence, by the glitter, though it were of the whole globe in gold.

What I ſhould apprehend for her moſt, and of which yet, I am afraid not only to wound her delicacy with the mention, but in the very mention, to incline her the more to what I apprehend, is, her giving to reſpects of family-intereſt a weight in her determination that might unfavorably affect her future condition. Knowing how much eaſier it is to keep egotiſm out of one's words, than out of one's thoughts and actions, it is not to a fine verboſe form of proteſtation that I truſt your doing juſtice to the clearneſs of my ſpirit, but to that inſtinctive worthineſs of your

own heart, which cannot fail of doing juſtice to the reality of my ſentiments. It is then, on this unaffected principle, that I entreat of you to make Clara ſenſible that ſhe could not, on this occaſion, offer to me, or to her ſiſter, a greater indignity, than that of not following the directions of her own heart, in ſo ſacred a point of perſonal importance to her, as the diſpoſal of herſelf for life.

Hoping and believing every thing for the beſt, I am ever, dear Aunt,

Yours, &c.

EDWARD MELLEFONT.

LETTER XI.

Lord LOVELL *to* HENRY GOLDING, *Esq*;

London.

ALL is loſt, dear Hal, or ſo very near it, that I have but one chance left, and if that ſhould fail me, why then, heigh for the lover's leap, for I will be curſed if ever I take the matrimonial one. That is a ſtate of puniſhment to which, I hope, I am not predeſtinated.

You

You muſt know, there is no ſtratagem, no art, that I could think of, but what I have been trying, to eſtabliſh my point with this ſtrange, perverſe, what ſhall I call her, Angel, for that word is at the end of my pen, and places itſelf on the paper, almoſt without my leave.

I had often ſeen a woman caught by the diſcontinuance of a lover's chace, which as ſoon as ſhe perceived, ſhe wheeled about inſenſibly, in a doubling maze, and chopped into his mouth. Upon this plan, I had, for ſome days, left off that conſtancy of viſits with which I had beſieged her at my ſiſter's; or if I went there, I not only took no notice of Clara, beyond that kind

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of common civility, which is half an insult, when it has been for some time preceded by more particular distinctions, but I occasionally singled out Lady Arabella Castres, a very pretty young lady, who is often with them, and began to pay her such a court, as I flattered myself would be observed by Clara, and pique, at least, her vanity, or alarm that fear, so natural to women, the fear of losing a conquest. But I might just as well have spared myself the pains of playing a part that cost me so much repugnance, for Clara never once gave the least sign of paying any more attention to my airs of desertion, or change, than she had done to my tendereſt assiduities. In short, I found myself not a whit the forwarder for this

often

often ſucceſsful ſtale ſtratagem of love-militant. I ſoon then came back to my colors, without her taking any more notice of my return to her, than ſhe had done of my leaving her. But what yet hurt me worſt of all, was that intrepid eaſe, gaiety, and frankneſs, with which ſhe never failed of uſing me, in common with every one elſe, except when I ventured to be particular to her, when, without any ſimptom of emotion, ſhe behaved to me with ſuch a frozen reſerve, ſo chilling an indifference, that her anger would have been a thouſand times more preferable, and leſs diſcouraging. This is the more galling, Hal, for that you well know I am not uſed to ſuch treatment.

" Give

"Give her over," you will say. Ay, that I would if I could; but a hatchet struck into my head could not give me greater pain than but the thought of it. I am even obliged to persevere, in my own defence; for while she remains unpossessed, she so thoroughly engrosses my whole faculties of desire, that she not only hinders me from being happy with herself, but with the whole sex besides. Her incomparable image rises to me in bar of every application to another woman. My constancy is not so much a merit as a necessity. In short, I could with pleasure sacrifice half my estate to the getting her upon my own terms. Nay, I would gladly say to her, Spare my liberty,

berty, and take my fortune. Nay, in ſome moments, the devil of deſire tempts me ſo violently, torments me ſo fiercely, that I could almoſt marry her in a paſſion, if it were but to get rid of my damned love.

I had, however, a glimmering of hope left, and that was to come at her through a kind of aunt, one Mrs. Buckley, whom I mentioned to you in my laſt, and who, I had reaſon to think, knew the world, and underſtood practice. To her, then, I made my application, with ſuch offers as would have engaged many a lord that I could name to ſell himſelf, and throw his country, like paper and packthread, into the bargain. But I happened to be deviliſhly out

out in my conjectures about her; I met with such a let-down, Hal, such a let-down! I am not yet above half recovered of the cursed cut I then received over my crest. In short, that string is intirely snapped; and against touching the matrimonial one, even though with no other intention than to make it subservient to my purpose of avoiding matrimony, I have an aversion that equals the horror of water in one bitten by a mad dog. And yet, I find I must have recourse to that detested expedient, and strike my reserve-blow.

I had fortunately thrown into my apology to Mrs. Buckley, the hint of my design to repair the injury she was pleased to think done to Clara's honor,

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in my application to her for her good offices. Now this hint lays a plauſible enough foundation for my intended plan of procedure.

I propoſe, then, to make a falſe-confidence to Lady Lovell, of my having entertained ſerious thoughts of honorable addreſſes to Clara. There is not the leaſt reaſon to fear her taking me at my word. It is, perhaps, the only point I could pitch on, which I would not be ſure of carrying with her fondneſs. But in this I am as far from expecting to find her tractable, as, indeed, I am from wiſhing it. No. The old Lady, at the bare mention of it, will take fire finely; and the leaſt ſhe will do will be to lay me under

under the whole weight of her disgrace. So much the better. The more noise she will make, and I dare swear she will not make a little, the more service she will do me. In asking what I foreknow will not be granted, I shall, to borrow an expession of Lord Haversham's, have "asked a denial," and that is the very thing I want. In the mean while, the devil will be in it if this motion of mine will not at least look well. Such a proof of my sincerity must reconcile me to Mrs. Buckley, and to Clara give me such a merit of suffering for her sake, as may not improbably place me on a better footing with her than I have hitherto been. The ground will be the less hard for my approaches. Not

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to mention, that, by this ſtep, I ſhall get Lady Harriet greatly in my intereſt, who would not, for the world, promote it in any other way, and will zealouſly do it in this, from the joy it would give her at once to make her friend's fortune, to contribute to what ſhe ſincerely believes would render me happy, and draw cloſer the ties of friendſhip between her and Clara, of whom ſhe is exceſſively fond; nor, every thing conſidered, faith, do I wonder at it.

Of ſuch a ſituation, then, it will be hard, indeed, if I do not make my advantage, without the danger of being drawn into an engagement, which all this art is meant to elude.

But

But to put things at the worſt, and to ſuppoſe an impoſſibility, was Lady Lovell to deprive me of the plea of her refuſal of conſent, my game would be indeed more difficult, but far from deſperate. I ſhould, by the time it would take to bring her to that point, have, in all human probability, ſo far familiariſed and ingratiated myſelf with Clara, as to ſtand fair for the benefit of that chapter of accidents, which ſo often favors the bold and artful lover. You underſtand me, Hal.

And now dare, after this, to think yourſelf ſo neceſſary to my ſchemes of gallantry, that I could not take a ſtep out of your leading-ſtrings. However,

I really

I really wish you was with me, though, from your last, I have not much room to expect it.

Yours,

LOVELL.

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LETTER XII.

HENRY GOLDING, *Esq*; *to Lord* LOVELL.

My Lord, *Cheſter.*

UPON my honor, your Lordſhip is a noble engineer. What a train have you laid to blow up the fort of that little ſpitfire? Is it for me to preſume to be "neceſſary to your "ſcheams of gallantry?" No, no, you beat me hollow. Till I knew your lordſhip, I thought I was ſomebody at that ſport, but I find now I am nobody. If I mean to get on, I muſt go to ſchool

to your Lordſhip; you are a perfect Matchawell at intreagues. All I have to ſay, is, and you muſt give me leave to be free with you, your Lordſhip knows I am apt to be too ſincear; I muſt tell you, I think you give yourſelf a damned deal of trouble, when you might have readier meals than running hares. May I be the capital figure of the firſt collar-day at Tyburn, if I think any of the puſſes worth the pains of hunting them tender. Zounds! give me the thing at hand, a good willing tit, even though ſhe ſtood at livery in one of the ſtalls at Covent-garden, before any of your ſhy ones, with all their damned vartue at their tails. I know your Lordſhip will immediately twit me in the teeth with the riſk I run of being had before Dr. Rock,

Rock, for misdemeanours of that kind. All that is true, my Lord, but a little discretion is a fine thing. Merry and wise, say I. With good care, and picking of one's bits, there may be found flesh as sweet and as little fly-blown in a baud's larder, as in the safe of a nunnery. Indeed, it requires some person that knows the market well to be the caterer, and grant clean bills of health; otherwise there is no insurance against consequences. Take things as they run in common, there is no venturing on muscles, mushrooms, and women of the town; the danger sells the pleasure.

You are, I find, for keeping, but that is a devilish expensive lay. If your

miſtreſs ſhould not even play you jades tricks, and keep true to you, as it is not to be ſuppoſed ſhe could do otherwiſe to ſuch a fine gentleman as your Lordſhip, why then there's brats and chriſtenings, till at laſt you come as much into family-order as if you was lawfully tethered; unleſs your Lordſhip would do as I do, who always leave the cow and the calf to ſhift for their own fodder.

But as to bidding matrimony defiance, there we agree to a charm; with this difference, that your Lordſhip, being much wiſer than I, has taken upon truſt the torments of that hell of a ſtate; whereas nothing would ſerve me but I muſt be puppy enough to make perſonally

ſonally the experiment, and it turned out as I deſerved; for by Jove I was finely ſped. I married for a fortune, which did not, however, turn out near what I had imagined, a woman rather ſtricken in years, who caught me, by looking as if ſhe would die. But, what do you think? My pretious had the impudence to be jealous of me, and gave herſelf the airs of expecting I ſhould be conſtant to her ſtale charms. Conſtant, too! with a vengeance! But I was even with her: I preſently broke the beldam of wearing yellow ſtockings, and cured her ſuſpicions for ever, by certainty; for I brought home too ſtrapping drabs, kept them for ſome time under her noſe, by way of exerciſe for her patient-Grizzleſhip, and then turned

her a-drift upon board-wages. However, the dear creature is dead, at laſt, though, by the way, her heart was ſo tough, it took a damned deal of breaking. I found it a great deal eaſier to get rid of her fortune than of her!—But if ever I am caught again in that nooſe, may my wife turn the tables upon me, and ſend me to the wrong ſide of the turf.

I love women well enough, when I want them, but who the deuce would chuſe to live in a cook's ſhop, where the meat is for ever under his noſe, whether he has any ſtomach to it or not? Wives, too, are ſuch unconſcionable creatures, they are for ever either picking a quarrel with you for the ſake of the

ſweets

ſweets of reconciliation, or extorting more fondneſs from you than you can well afford, when the poor devil of a huſband is like a debtor in a ſpunging-houſe, ſqueezed for expence, without his being either in caſh or in cue for it. In ſhort, my Lord, matrimony is the the devil, and all the joys of it as much againſt the grain as ſtatute-labor, or as dull as playing at cards for nothing. Talk of happy marriages! one may as well talk of ſoft thunder, ſlow lightning, a jolly famine, a ſweet plague, lively funerals, plump ſkeletons, and pretty death's heads.

From my ſoul, then, I worſhip your better genus, for inſpiring you with ſuch a ſcorn of the trap.

As

As for that vixon to whom you are now, it ſeems, doing the honor of a chace, hang me, if I do not believe your Lordſhip is taking the advantage of my abſence to hum me. It is a very likely ſtory, indeed, that any girl of her degree in life, with fleſh and blood about her, could hold out four-and-twenty hours againſt ſuch proffers as yours, with ſo handſome a young nobleman tacked to them. Who does not know, my Lord, that you are the crack of the field, with gold to ſilver odds in your favor. But I ſee what it is, you are ſo generous a ſportſman, that you mean to give her law; you have not yet put forth half your ſtrength; whenever it comes to that,

my

my life to an old ſhoe, that ſhe will lay ſubdued and breathleſs before you.

In the mean while, it is but too true that I am detained here ſore againſt my will, but I hope it will not be ſo long as your Lordſhip ſeems to think; and, to ſay the truth, in the method of ſap that you are conducting your ſiege, I do not apprehend that I could be of much uſe to you, as you are ſo much a better engineer than myſelf. Storming is more in my way. Say but the word, and I will, at all events, come poſt to town, and provide four barrels of gunpowder to blow up the beldam at Richmond, and half-a-dozen mirmidons, that in the face of day ſhall carry off your Princeſs

Princeſs in triumph, and plump her into your arms.

Your Lordſhip is, I hope, perſuaded, that no Cormantine Négroe could be more abſolutely devoted to your commands, than,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt humble

and moſt obedient ſervant,

HENRY GOLDING.

End of the FIRST VOLUME.

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